



Property bubble now hitting Greenwich WN reporter

“We lived in Westcombe Park for more than seven years; for the first five years our landlord did nothing with our rent. Then two years ago he raised it £70, last year he raised it £50, and this year he wanted an extra £200. At that point, we knew it was getting ridiculous and we had to move,” a young mother told the *WN*.

Well, we know why, now: the Royal Borough is being hit by the London housing bubble. According to Halifax, the UK’s largest mortgage lender, Greenwich now tops the list of towns and cities recording the largest increase in house prices in 2014.

The average house price in Greenwich rose from £263,183 to £328,044 in the 12 months to last November. That increase, of 24.6%, was almost three times the 8.5% rise recorded across the UK as a whole.

We used to think that it was property values in central London that were being hiked by rich foreigners seeking a lucrative investment. But now they are on our doorsteps; or rather, we are on their doorsteps.

“No social housing”

For example, new homes built in Abbey Wood were being marketed to wealthy investors from Asia as containing “no social housing.”

Development Securities’ £85 m Cross Quarter Scheme had an “exclusive launch” in the luxury Mandarin Hotel in Hong Kong; and investors were told that it is “a fully private block with no social housing.”

The cheapest three bedroom home in Abbey Tower is £528k. Britain’s biggest housebuilding companies are making a killing. Aua Yeboa, who works in a local beauty salon, near the Abbey Tower, development, said: “I would love to buy an apartment – but there’s no way that I can afford one. The homes should be for locals.”

Questions are being asked about what controls are being exercised by local authority planners: surely, any large building development should be required to include both social and affordable housing?

Well, no: as part of its Gateway Regeneration Project, the London Borough of Lewisham has approved 362 new homes: none of them have any affordable units. Apparently, affordable housing in the two new tower blocks is “not viable.”

Broken guidelines

Even the developers say current government policy is “deeply flawed” and “wrecks social mix.” Planning regulations require developers to contribute funds for local amenities (such as schools, affordable housing or roads – known as Section 106 payments) – yet the housing minister, Brandon Lewis allows developers to avoid or drastically reduce such payments: in effect, putting company profits above people’s needs. John Walker, director of planning in Tory-controlled Westminster Council described the policy as “insane.”

“Public land was given to profit-making private interests in exchange for being allowed to rent back a slice of public space. It’s privatization by another name.” *Nancy Taaffe*

Helen Mercer from Lewisham People Before Profit, said: “The Gateway development has nothing for local people. It brings more residents without providing any additional schools, medical care, trains, or buses.”

To be fair, things are not being made easy for local councils. For example, take Hutchison Whampoa’s Convoys Wharf scheme. Lewisham Council’s concerns – about the size of the planned towers, the number of affordable homes, and serious road traffic issues – were overruled by Boris Johnson on appeal – breaking his own planning guidelines.

Homes – or investments?

Are we going the same way here in Greenwich? Kidbrooke Village will have more units than the old Ferrier Estate it replaced – but with little or no extra provision for schools, clinics, or public transport. The *WN* has been unable to find out how many of the

units have been sold to foreigners as an investment and will, like so many others around London, stand empty.

But one cynical local resident commented: “I just hope that that is what’s happened. Otherwise, our roads and schools could not cope.”

As Matthew Pennycook points out on page 6, councils’ negotiations with developers are often fraught. It will be interesting to view documents relating to the negotiations between Greenwich and Knight Dragon in 2012 over the peninsula development following the court order that they be released.

Housing is seldom mentioned in party manifestos – but it should be: there are complaints about houses becoming, not homes for working people, but an investment tool, and local authorities such as Wandsworth which have a duty to house homeless people, are carrying out what is being called “social cleansing.”

Across London, poor people are being evicted so that the estates can be re-developed “viably”.

And then there is the running sore of sky-high rents – people are having to pay a fortune for accommodation little bigger than a box-room. Many tenants are now having to share rooms, often with complete strangers.

Signs of hope?

In Greenwich, the Council has now launched a Hidden Homes and Extensions scheme, costing £1.7 m, to convert and extend empty properties and other types of buildings into new homes. But Cllr Chris Kirby, RGB’s cabinet member for housing, admits: “Available land we could use for building new homes is at a premium in this borough.”

Is that because so much of the land has been sold to private developers?

In the longer term, things may be looking more hopeful: there are plans to build thousands of new homes on the Peninsula. Of these, 25% will be categorised as affordable, and are to include student housing and special needs housing. There’s also a shared ownership scheme*.

Let’s hope that these plans remain “viable”. * See page 6.

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The original scheme in Abbey Wood envisaged an 81,000 sq. ft. Sainsbury’s foodstore, 5,000 sq. ft. of retail and commercial space and 220 new apartments, including some affordable units. The latter are out of reach for most local people. The scheme is attractive to investors, because once Crossrail is completed, residents will have easy access to Canary Wharf and the City.

Fact file

* In 2011, a report, *The World in London*, published by top estate agent Savills, documented billions of pounds of money from overseas flowing into the capital’s prime housing market.

* The biggest investors in central London property have been from Eastern Europe (15% of the market) followed by Middle Eastern and North African buyers (14% market share) Average price paid: £5m, and rising.

* The number of affordable homes built in England has fallen to an eight-year low. Figures unearthed by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism show 42,710 affordable homes will be built in the year ending this coming April – the lowest since 2006; this represents a 26% fall since 2010.

* 1.4 million families are on council waiting lists. Only one new Council house is built for every 21 sold to tenants

* “Affordable housing” is a relative term: it means costing only 80% of the market value. ie. only affordable by a select few. “Affordable” should not be confused with “social housing”, which working Londoners urgently need.

* Britain’s ten biggest housebuilding companies have seen their profits climb to £2.1 billion in 2014 – 34% up on 2013. Much of the profit is from sales to non-residential purchasers, mainly in central London.

* 1 Hyde Park is now the most expensive in the country. One apartment was sold for £136m. You can drive your sports car into the lift . . .

Comments:

“Many people are struggling to pay their rent. I will fight to ensure the council builds more and better social housing and drives a harder bargain with developers. I will also do everything I can to help families at risk of being forced out of this ward by the Tories’ bedroom tax.”

Cherry Parker (Labour Councillor)

“Labour councillors like to talk a good game on affordable housing, but they simply don’t deliver. Instead, as we have seen on the Peninsula, the council rolls over and lets big developers get their way. It’s time for the Labour-run council to stand up to the developers and make sure Greenwich gets the affordable housing it needs.”

Matt Hartley Conservative Parliamentary Candidate for Greenwich & Woolwich

The Westcombe Society

Daffodil Tea Sat 7th March

2.00 - 4.00 pm for Senior Citizens: good company, homemade cakes and sandwiches, a quiz, a free raffle – who wouldn’t want to come! If you haven’t had an invitation and would like to come, or know someone who would like to attend, please contact Caroline on 020 8853 0948.

Nearly New Sale Sat 21st March

Children’s Clothes, Toys & Equipment - bargains galore. 2.00pm to 3.30pm. Entrance 50p. Members 30p, children free. If you would like to book a table or rail, please contact Joanne on 07709 571777.

Sat 4th April Easter Egg Hunt 2.00 - 4.00 pm
Come to Mycenae House gardens for an Eggcellent Hunt!
No adults allowed unless accompanied by children!

< < News briefs > >

NHS Greenwich

The Greenwich Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are holding the next NHS Greenwich Governing Body meeting on Wednesday 25th March at the Grand Salon, Charlton House, Charlton Road, London SE7 8RE from 1.30pm - 5.00pm.

This is a public meeting. Anyone who would like to attend (and ask questions!) is warmly invited to come; no booking needed.

Court news

Congratulations to Baron Greenwich, aka HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, for receiving a knighthood at the hands of Tony Abbott, monarchist Prime Minister of Australia, as part of the celebrations for Australia Day. Good on yer, mate!

On our doorstep . . .

The Fan Museum is putting on an exhibition to commemorate the Battle of Waterloo which saw the final defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte. *Waterloo: Life and Times* runs until May 10th, and also features fans made to commemorate other military events.

Happy Easter . . .

No Southeastern services will operate to or from Cannon Street, London Bridge, Charing Cross or Waterloo East over Easter: so, no service to these stations from April 3rd - 6th. Visit www.westcombesociety.org for details.

20 mph speed limit

Lewisham is to introduce a borough-wide speed limit of 20 mph from January 2016.

March for Homes

Public anger over housing issues spilled over onto the streets in February. A number of local residents took part in a march on City Hall to demand Mayor Boris Johnson deliver solutions to the capital’s deepening housing crisis. A typical slogan was: “Social Housing, not Social Cleansing”.

General Election 2015

Mycenae House Community Centre and Blackheath & Greenwich United Nations Association are organising a hustings meeting at Mycenae House Community Centre, Mycenae Road, Blackheath SE3 on Wednesday 15th April 7.30 - 9.00. Come along to hear, and question, your candidates! Info: 0208 858 8489

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Every year the Westcombe Society holds a party to thank all those who volunteer during the year. Also invited: newcomers to the area, and of course, would-be members planning to join! This year, the party was on Feb. 21st, and a good time was had by all. Many thanks to the Events Committee for organising a great party.



ABOVE: Our chairman Marilyn Little presents a cheque to Andrew Mitchell, head of fund-raising for the 999 Club, which runs a shelter for homeless people in Deptford, and Louise, a local volunteer with the 999 Club.

The money has already been spent on a much-needed industrial washing machine, so that guests can come in, have a shower, and get the towels washed. Andrew said it had made a huge difference, and thanked the Society for its support.



ABOVE: Two flautists, Catherine and Catherine, were a delight to listen to.



RIGHT: Happy Birthday Myles! 88 already?

LEFT & BELOW: Carpe diem!

"What a swell party it was!"
[from the film *High Society*]



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: Patricia Gillard, Chair BRSVA
Have you ever been stopped by a driver or pedestrian, near Old Dover Road or Stratheden Road, who requested directions to Greenwich, Woolwich, Charlton, Blackheath Village or Shooters Hill etc?

Have you noticed that there is nothing to tell you where you are in this part of Royal Greenwich? Well, there used to be a directional wooden fingerpost which stood on the green outside The Royal Standard public House. It was made of wood and some people remember it, but when it started to crumble it was never replaced. It is mentioned in old books of Greenwich.

We, The Blackheath Royal Standard Village Association (BRSVA), a group of local people which includes members of The Westcombe Society, local Councillors, local residents, Church ministers and Traders' Association, intend to replace it to help local businesses, visitors and others, and in a small way, put this ancient part of Royal Greenwich on the map.

Raising the funds to buy the materials and make the post is in progress and we hope that it will appear this spring. If you would like to come along to our planning group then you would be most welcome.

Contact: pattygillard@yahoo.co.uk

From: G. Bailey, Westcombe Park Rd
Recently we had house guests who were woken at 5.00 am by a series of aircraft overhead. Has anyone else noticed an increase in noise nuisance from aircraft?

Ed: In February, a £220 million project to expand London City Airport was given the go-ahead, despite more than 1,000 objections.

From: Peter Greaves The Plantation
My wife and I got separate emails reminding us that our Freedom Passes were due for renewal and inviting us to do it on-line.

It was extremely simple. All we had to do was to type in the number on our existing pass in the indicated box and send it in. No need to scan anything – and we received our new ones in the post, using our original photos. Brilliant!

From: David Robson FRCP
In reply to Malcom Hardy, the Freedom Pass renewal process was straightforward in my case. However I do not remember having to scan documents but instead just entering some data online. Ed: Me too!

From: Vivien Davies Old Dover Road
I am co-director of a local Parent Group supporting parents and carers of children with disabilities and special needs. We have been engaging with members of the London Assembly and local councillors, to tell them about the issues we need help with and finding out what they can do to help.

We've had a great response from local councillors including Cllr. Matthew Pennycook and Cllr John Fahy (Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children's Services).

We are a small completely voluntary group of parents working hard on a really tiny grant to give parents of children like ours a voice. If you are a parent or carer of a child with special needs or disabilities, do come and join us.

Contact: www.greenwichparentvoice.com
Email: info@greenwichparentvoice.com
Twitter: @GPVinfo

From: Trevor Allman Coleraine Road
As a concerned resident & Left Unity supporter, I attended the "No Silvertown Tunnel" AGM at Mycenae House in January, and heard an informative speech by Christian Woolmar.

Given the dire environmental impact that the proposed tunnel could have, with increased pollution and traffic congestion levels, and the close proximity of the next General Election, there was a notable absence of any Labour, Conservative, UKIP or Green Party parliamentary candidates for the Greenwich & Woolwich constituency (I don't believe the Liberal Democrats have selected a candidate yet).

What is especially reprehensible, given the Green Party's alleged concern for the environment, was that both their candidates for this constituency, and Eltham, were in the room above the "No Silvertown Tunnel" meeting, and even though their meeting ending early, neither

Yanno Patrinos

Yanno was born in 1939 and spent his early years in Eleusis, near Athens. When aged six an accident with a booby trapped bomb nearly killed him – and left him blind.

After a long time in hospital, his mother brought him on a nightmarish journey across war-damaged Europe for treatment at Moorfields Eye Hospital. After a rather unhappy period at a primary boarding school in Bristol, he went to Worcester College for the Blind, where he was much happier, in due course becoming chess captain and, finally, head prefect. He then read Law at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he met his future wife Hilary (one of many volunteers who came to read his law texts to him).

They married immediately after going down from Oxford and moved to London where Yanno undertook his training contract with Godfrey, Davis and Batt. In 1970, shortly after the birth of their two children (Andrew and Helena) they came to their house in Mycenae Road. They were active members of the Westcombe Society in its earliest years, and Yanno was chairman at the time of the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

After his training, Yanno joined Heald Nickinson (later taken over by Radcliffe's), where he subsequently became a partner. Along with a sharp intelligence, Yanno's phenomenal memory was the basis of his success as a commercial property solicitor. He could recall complex documents after they were read to him just once.

Yanno loved sport, and played vicarious rugby, cricket and hockey through Andrew's school teams. One of his greatest joys was to find somewhere quiet on a summer's day to listen to Test Match Special.

Yanno's last years were marred by illness, and he had to struggle to maintain his humour and patience. But he remained at home until the very last. He died on 21st January. Our deepest sympathies to Hilary and all the family.

Dick Allard

bothered to look in to give even their token support for the campaign to stop the Silvertown Tunnel and its negative environmental impact.

It seems it is only through 'People Power' that we are going to prevent being choked in this area with pollution, as neither the current main political parties nor the council seem to give a damn about our health and welfare.

From: Name and address supplied
In January, I receiving a Police leaflet alerting Vanbrugh Hill dwellers to incidents of burglary. This reminded me of something of which we can all do to help with the problem.

Though we are reminded to cancel milk and newspapers during an absence, protruding papers from a letter box are also a give-away sign. The majority of these are unsolicited and include Freebie newspapers, and information about takeaways; but it will not be long before they are joined by electioneering leaflets when the General Election campaign gets underway.

Those responsible for delivering this material should ensure it does not protrude from the letter box. I suggest householders should contact the source indicating no interest or support would be given unless remedied.

Those who deliver the WN on a regular basis do so in a manner of public spirit and know the rules. Next time, perhaps the Police might add this issue to their list.

Ed: Thankfully, the police report that there has been a decrease in burglary incidents in our area – but residents should remain vigilant.

From: The Blackheath Society
Following last year's successful Community Clear up, Martin Hyde is organising another clear up day for Sat. 21st March 2 - 4.00pm. All are welcome to join in this local Spring-Clean. As usual, people are asked to meet at the Talbot Place Car Park.

From: St George's Church
To mark Fairtrade Fortnight, we are having a stall in the church on March 1st. This would be a good way of ordering your Fair Trade Easter Eggs (order by March 15th please). All include a booklet giving the Real meaning of Easter.

LOCAL NEWS

Council's parking plans 'on hold'

Editing the *WN* is getting easier – we just need to repeat the same old stories . .

Our local traders on Old Dover Road continue to ask what has happened to the parking review which was promised for autumn 2013. Is the Council cooking up a cunning plan?

Do these words have a familiar ring? Well, they should do: this was the report in the *WN* in March 2014, and it continued: "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 organized 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...."

Readers will recall there was a very predictable outcry against this idea - and

another petition resulted. Back to the drawing board . . . That was all in 2014.

Forward to the present: like Cllr Brighty (February's *WN*), Cllr Paul Morrissey also contacted the council with the same old queries . . . and got this result from Tom Jackson. In part, the letter reads:

You might know that the Council has a programme of installing new, and reviewing existing, control parking zones (CPZs) ... During 2014/15 we have prioritised work in the east and south of the Borough.

However, Mr Jackson said he had been contacted by residents in Coleraine & Mycenae Road questioning the boundary between the free bays and the permit bays. He had also heard concerns expressed about parking in the Standard and Old Dover Road. He goes on:

I am writing to advise you that it is very likely that a review of the Westcombe CPZ will be included in the 2015/16 work plan. the review is unlikely to start until late May/June at the earliest ...

I am writing to your ward member colleagues in the same vein . . . If you have any queries on this please contact me.

Yours Tim Jackson

But please don't blame Mr Jackson. It's not his fault. All we know at the *WN* is this: traders are still asking, after at least 7 years: "What's happening about parking in Old Dover Road?"

Support Cystic Fibrosis Trust

The London Marathon has become hugely popular, with many thousands of runners – and millions of spectators and volunteers. It's also a great way of raising money for a wide range of charities, as we at the Greenwich and Blackheath Cystic Fibrosis Trust have discovered.

Cystic fibrosis is a life-shortening inherited disease, affecting over 10,000 people in the UK. You can't catch or develop cystic fibrosis, it's something you're born with and most cases in the UK are now diagnosed soon after birth.

Each year one of our very successful fundraising schemes is to offer bed and breakfast to London Marathon runners with friends in this area.

This is not intended to be professional B & B but an enterprise to raise money for a very special charity and at the same time offer a friendly local home to a runner before their huge challenge. The runners

we accommodate are taking part in the marathon to raise money for the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, and both runners and hosts from previous years have told us that they really enjoyed the experience.

Bed and breakfast is offered at £50 for a single or £75 for a double and this is donated directly by runners to the CF Trust, so hosts do not need to deal with any payments. (Many of the runners do not actually want breakfast as they have a special food that they bring with them.)

The date of the London Marathon this year is Sunday 26th April so guests would be staying on the night of Saturday 25th April. If you think you might be willing to take part this year or have any questions please do get in touch with me. Many thanks!

Sacha Bright
Greenwich and Blackheath Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Sachabright@hotmail.com

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Seminars on Inheritance Tax

If you missed local wealth manager Daren Wallbank's free seminar on Inheritance Tax planning at Mycenae House last November, there's a second chance to find out how to leave more of your money to your loved ones and less to the tax man.

Daren is holding more free seminars at Mycenae House in Westcombe Park on Thursday 19th March and at the Quaker Meeting House in Blackheath on Thursday 26th March, at 3.pm and 7.00pm.

Attending this event could save you over £300,000 in tax! Here's what a local resident said about the seminar:

"I was aware that I had an inheritance tax liability before I went along to Daren's seminar. But I was shocked when he explained just how much of my estate would go to the tax man unless I acted now! Fortunately, Daren has proved a mine of expert knowledge on how to legally reduce my liabilities. His advice has fundamentally changed my husband's and my thinking on how we look at our estate. He's come up with some really clever strategies

that are helping us move from years of accumulating wealth towards making sure it benefits our family now and in the future. I'd urge anyone who is thinking about estate planning to get in touch with Daren now." *Jacqueline, Westcombe Park*

Places are limited so please contact Daren by phone or email to book your place.
Daren Wallbank Ginkgo Financial 0203 675 9050 email
events@ginkgofinancial.com

News from St George's Church

The 999 Club isn't alone in providing shelter for homeless people. St George's has been providing food and shelter in our parish to 15 homeless people every Tuesday night, in partnership with the Forum@ Greenwich.

Many volunteers – including Chris Taylor, St George's talented chef – are helping out, both in St George's and other centres. The Greenwich Night Shelter Project ends in March, and it is hoped will be repeated next year.

- Last month, representatives of many different faiths took part in a pilgrimage across London that started in the Regent's Park Mosque, went on to the Central Synagogue in Great Portland Street before

going on to Westminster Abbey. A number of people from St George's and Christ-church Forum took part in this interfaith pilgrimage, the brainchild of the Coexist Foundation which seeks to foster greater understanding across divides.

After gathering outside Parliament, to show "a united love of democracy" the pilgrimage went on to St Thomas' Hospital "to emphasise the faiths' shared respect for life." Cambridge University's Divinity Professor David Ford said: "The religion agenda is too often hijacked by extremists who pervert the message of their faith to meet their political aims. We are celebrating the different faiths' common ground and their shared imperative for peace."

Westcombe Woodlands

Our next Volunteer Day will be on Saturday 7th March from 10 am until 1.00 pm. Our meeting point will be in the Maze Hill cul-de-sac at about 9.50am.

If you bring your own tools, we suggest that you mark your name on them. Gloves and boots also recommended.

Please note that access to the site is not suitable for children or for people with mobility problems. Coffee, tea, fruit squash and biscuits will be provided. Please note there are no toilet facilities on site.

Please call Frank Smith on 8852 6390 or 07989 445 057 with any queries you day, or email:

westcombewoodlands@hotmail.co.uk.

Frank Smith



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FEATURES: THE ARTS

Rumpus on the campus

Following the Charlie Hebdo debacle, the western media have been full of articles asserting the value and importance of freedom of speech; but we now have our own *cause célèbre*, at Goldsmiths.

The feminist stand-up comedian Kate Smurthwaite was planning to put on a comedy show at Goldsmiths University; well done, Goldsmiths, for landing this world-class comedian who has performed internationally, and has featured many times on the BBC – as much as a political commentator as a comedian. (She appeared on BBC TV's *Question Time* in 2014).

So why was it her show was pulled by the College's comedy society after reports of campaigners threatening to picket the event? The Feminist Society met to decide whether the show should go on, and 70% said that it should; but a minority threatened to picket the event.

Let Kate take up the story: "I was booked to do a show at Goldsmiths College, in south London. I've performed there many times before. The show was a joint event for the Comedy Society and the Feminist Society – members of which could come for free – and we then agreed they would put up a ticket page for anyone else – such as local residents who fancied coming, and as a way to cover costs....

"The day before the show I was getting a lot of hassle on Twitter because I had dared to suggest that cutting the opening hours of Spearmint Rhino strip club was a good thing. From the get-go I'd started blocking people on Twitter who were bothering me, so I could generally only see half of the conversation that was going on. But I did get to see messages like this one from the LSE Students' Union Feminists: ". . . we could contact the Goldsmiths FemSoc to see if they want to protest".

Kate thought it only fair to let the organisers know there was a risk of a protest of people disrupting the show.

Why would they want to do that? The Comedy club sent her a message mentioning "accusations", and also that some of her comments had been "Islamophobic". This she angrily denies – saying that she had merely said that women should not be forced to wear a burka.

Kate Smurthwaite was well-known at the Edinburgh Festival, and since then she has performed her show more than fifty times. Her show is not everyone's cup of tea: she has strong (and controversial) views, for example on women's rights to choose, and prostitution (she thinks it should be legal – but clients should be prosecuted). The latter view was it seems unpopular at Goldsmiths because it could threaten the livelihood of sex workers.

The sorts of issues, you would think, that a bunch of modern University students would take in their stride, or at least take on board as a stimulus to thought.

Well, no: they dropped the show. Another message read: "I have to send you a passage about our 'safe space' policy outlining kinda what you can or cannot say. Because our union is "for" sex working it's probably best to avoid that area of conversation that's what they are most worried about."

Very strange, you'd think, that anyone would feel they should picket a comedy show if they disagreed with the views of the person performing. Said Kate: "The strangest thing is that my show is not about prostitution. I don't even mention it. In a massively ironic coincidence, my show is about free speech, its power and uses and abuses. It is also about Saudi prisoner of conscience Raif Badawi, who is now being nominated for the Nobel peace prize."

So much for freedom of expression at our universities. Well-known feminist activists Beatrix Campbell and Deborah Cameron (among many others) have called on universities to keep a "safe space" (sic) for freedom of speech.

Je Suis
Kate
Smurth-
waite?

Puccini's Tosca

Midsummer Opera in the Spring? Why not? Opera is good at any time!

Midsummer Opera is much loved in our neck of the woods – a high percentage of Midsummer Opera's performers live in SE3, SE10 and SE13. All the more reason for going to their performance of Giacomo Puccini's *TOSCA* at St John's Waterloo in March.

The performance will be sung in the original Italian and will be semi-staged; most unusually, the famous Te Deum at the end of the first Act features the church's organ.

The cast includes Deborah Stoddart as Tosca, John Upperton as Cavaradossi and Stephen Holloway as Scarpia.

The Chorus and Symphony Orchestra of Midsummer Opera will be joined by a children's choir from St Dunstan's College, Catford and the whole ensemble will be conducted by MSO's Artistic Director, David Roblou.

Tosca will be performed at St John's Church, 73 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8TY on Sun. 22nd March (4.30), Fri. 27th March (7.00pm) & Sun. 29th March (4.30pm) Tickets: £22 (£19 concs.) in advance or £26/£23 on the door. Box office: 020 7652 0070 or online: www.wegotickets.com



This dramatic poster advertised Connecticut Opera's production of *Tosca* in 2007 - 2008. See it in colour on our website!

Immersive theatre at the NMM

Many people go to the theatre to be transported into another world. In "immersive theatre", the audience are not merely passive bystanders. They are part of the story, however small their role, and they will find themselves in the middle of the action, either as a witness, or an actual character.

It is thinking like this that inspired the Punchdrunk Enrichment theatre company to mount their show *Against Captain's Orders: A Journey into the Uncharted* being put on at the National Maritime Museum. The show is for children aged 6 - 12 - no adult admitted unless accompanied by a child! The children are transported into an exciting world of maritime history, derring-do and adventure in this new family exhibition.

Children will be active throughout the experience. The performance takes

the children on the adventure of a lifetime – a theatrical journey through the Museum, the like of which has never been seen before: exploring the National Maritime Museum's extraordinary collection of maritime artefacts, each one with a story to tell.

The trip is exciting, enlightening, and, perhaps just a tiny bit dangerous . . . Anyone brave enough to get on board will scarcely believe what will happen next...

The show is on at the National Maritime Museum Special Exhibitions Gallery from 28th March until 31st August 2015, from 10.am daily. Open to schools and families with children aged 6-12 years. Cost: £19.75 per person (Friends 20% off) Each performance lasts 50 minutes.

NT's Connections

In March, Connections celebrates great new writing for the stage – and the energy, commitment and talent of young theatre-maker. 5,000 young people from 260 youth companies present 10 new plays commissioned by the National Theatre in 27 partner theatres. This year, The National Theatre supports the drama companies as they bring their performances to the stage at Greenwich Theatre. Included in the programme is a play put on by John Roan School on 20th March.

The young performers participating at the Greenwich Theatre are:

WED. 18th MARCH 6pm Craft Work Theatre Company - **Hood** by Katherine Chandler

THURS. 19 MARCH 6.00pm - Woolwich Polytechnic School - **Hood** (again)

8.00pm -Thomas Tallis School - **The Accordion Shop** by Cush Jumbo

FRIDAY 20 MARCH 6.00pm - John Roan School - **Remote** by Stef Smith

8.00pm - Reactivate, Knole Academy - **The**

Accordion Shop by Cush Jumbo
SAT. 21 MARCH 7.00pm - Montage Theatre Arts
The Edelweiss Project by Ayub Khan Din
8.45pm - South London Theatre Youth Group -
Remote by Stef Smith
SUN. 22 MARCH 6.00pm - BRIT MT Collective
Hospital Food by Eugene O'Hare
SUN. 29 MARCH 6.00pm Churchill Theatre
Connections Company Ben Ockrent's **Hacktivists**

Clare College Choir

Blackheath Halls is delighted to welcome the Choir of Clare College Cambridge, with the Dmitri Ensemble, for a special Passiontide Concert, including MacMillan's "Seven Last Words on the Cross" and John Tavener's haunting "Song for Athene". The programme also includes works by William Harris, Parry and Herbert Howells

This is a rare opportunity to hear one of the world's leading choral groups. Founded in 1971, they have since gained an enviable international reputation.

"Thrilling..." Edward Greenfield, *Gramophone Magazine*
Sat. 14 March 7.30pm | Great Hall Blackheath Halls
Tickets £24 | £20 | £5 under 16s

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WHAT'S ON

ARTS

NATIONAL MARITIME MUSEUM THE QUEEN'S HOUSE
THE ART AND SCIENCE OF EXPLORATION 1768 - 1780 In The Queen's House. See the Stubbs Kangaroo (and Dingo) saved by the public, and work of artists from all three of Captain Cook's voyages
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 **26th March** Dr Susan Kay Williams Imperial purple to Denim blue: the colourful history of textiles Non-members £5
GREENWICH DECORATIVE & FINE ARTS SOCIETY King William Court, the University of Greenwich **NEXT LECTURE: 9th Mar. From Rag Dolls to Robots - Chloe Sayer** Fellow of the Anthropological Institute 020 8852 7873 Non-members £8.00
MADE IN GREENWICH GALLERY 8293 9823 www.madeingreenwich.co.uk 324 Creek Rd SE10. **6th-15th March** New Paintings by David Walsh. Meet the artist between 12 and 4 on Sunday 8th and come on **Tuesday 12th** at 7.30 to hear Michael Bartholomew-Biggs read from his new collection "Pictures from a Postponed Exhibition", inspired by David's earlier work. Local poets Mick Delap and Fiona Moore will also read from their latest collections. Free events, refreshments available. 324 Creek Road SE10 9SW www.madeingreenwich.co.uk
GREENWICH GALLERY Peyton Place SE10 8RS **March 20th - April 5th** Crowds - prize contest with Award.io Mon-Friday 9.30-5.30 weekends 12-4pm. Admission Free.
FRIENDS OF CHARLTON HOUSE
The Old Library, Charlton House, Charlton Village. **Contact: 020 8293 5192 e-mail: oonachantrell@yahoo.co.uk** **Art exhibition 2015** A variety of work by local artists, for sale.
Friday 6th. March - Sunday 8th. March
Friday Opening Evening 7-9pm Wine and Snacks – Free Entry Viewing Saturday 10-5, Sunday 2-5 Come along and see this lively mix of work. Share a drink with the artists on Friday evening, 6th March.

CHILDREN & FAMILY

BLACKHEATH HALLS
Sat 21st March 3.00 pm **Recital room**
THERE'S A MONSTER IN MY PIANO £7.00
Ages 4+ Running time: 45 minutes
GREENWICH THEATRE
Sun 15th March 2.00 pm Mothers' Day Treat!
HOW THE KOALA LEARNT TO HUG Tickets £11.00 Children & Concs. £8.50 Age 3+
Mon 16 March 7.30 pm Pupils of Blackheath High School GDST present Disney's **BEAUTY AND THE BEAST JR.** Tickets £11.00 (concs. £9.00)
Tue 31 March **YEH SHEN** An enchanting tale of a young orphaned girl, a magical fish, a nasty step-mother and... a lost shoe. Will Yeh Shen be able to attend the New Year Festival? How can a fish, a dragon and a horse help her? Will she ever find happiness? And what happens to the shoe?

THE BRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRE.
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ANNUAL EASTER EGG HUNTS
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THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Sat 7th March Daffodil Tea
Sat 21st March Nearly New Sale
Sat 4th April Easter Egg Hunt Mycenae Gardens
Fri 17th April Quiz Night
May: AGM: Dates to be confirmed
Sat 27th June Members' Evening
Fri 25th Sept Macmillan Biggest Coffee Morning
Sat 26th Sept Nearly New Sale
Sat 10th Oct. Chrysanthemum Tea
Fri 23rd Oct. Quiz Night
Please ring Joanne on 07709 571777 if you would like to help out on any of these events!

COMMUNITY

CANCER RESEARCH LUNCH
Thurs. 5th. March at The Clarendon Hotel, Montpelier Row, Blackheath SE3 0RW **Aiden Kent** will be singing "Songs from Yesteryear" Prize draw & Raffle. To book, call Wendy on 8265 0335 by **Mon. 2nd March.** Cost: £8.50.
INDUSTRIAL HISTORY SOCIETY
10th March Elizabeth Blanchet on the prefabs of Lewisham's Excalibur Estate Meeting at The Old Bakehouse, Bennett Park, SE3. Please use the station car park. Meetings start at 7.30: non members £1.
BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel 020 8463 0100
Laughing Boy Comedy Club
Thu 19th Mar 8.00pm Line up:
Rob Deering, Ben Norris (Mock The Week)
Key McCarthy - MC for the evening
Viewed as one of the top ten 'hidden comedy hotspots' by GQ Magazine **Laughing Boy** £10
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon. & Thurs. 7.15 pm & on Wed. at 1.15 Tel. 8851 2609
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
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
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
THE CLARENDON HOTEL, Montpelier Row, Blackheath Tel. 8318 4321 Jazz at the Row very Wednesday from 7.00 pm in the bar.
BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel 020 8463 0100
Wed 18th March 8.00pm **Recital Room:**
JOAN OF ARC - A HISTORY by Helen Castor Tickets £10.00
ENGLISH FOLK MUSIC 9.00pm every Tuesday at the Lord pub, Creek Road; jazz Thursday

AGE EXCHANGE

BOOK SALES: on the second Saturday every month (except August & December) 10.00 am - 4.00 pm.
LUNCHTIME CONCERTS on the last Wednesday of every month by Trinity Laban students. Free, but there is a retiring collection in aid of Age Exchange & Blackheath Village Library.

SCHUBERT FESTIVAL
Details: trinitylaban.ac.uk/schubertfes
King Charles Court:
Tues 24th March 1.00, 4.00 & 7.00 pm
Wed 25th March 1.00 pm and 7.00 pm
Thurs. 26th March 1.00 pm and 4.00 pm
Fri 27th March 7.00pm
The Old Royal Naval College Chapel:
Fri 27th March 1.05 pm
All concerts FREE

TRINITY LABAN DANCE:
Thurs.5th March 7.30
Wendy Houstoun:
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THEATRE

THE GREENWICH THEATRE Crooms Hill, Greenwich, London SE10 8ES 020 8858 7755
Wed 4th - Sun. 8th March 8.00 pm **KATE** by Agnes Porkelsdottir Wild Iceland 1940, and the British are coming ... "Magic, beautiful, and unmissable ..." £16.00 concs £13.50
Thurs. 12th - Sat 14th March 7.30 pm
DALLOWAY, adapted from Virginia Woolf by Elton Townend Jones £16.00 concs £13.50
Tues 17th - Wed 18th March 8.00 pm **JUST** by Ali Smith A comic satire on contemporary justice. by Kidbrooke Theatre Company Ages 12+. £12.00 concs. £10.00
Wed 25th March 7.30 pm **PRINCESS IDA** The medieval musical that makes Game of Thrones look like tiddlywinks! Gilbert & Sullivan's take on the battle of the sexes
THE GEOFFREY WHITWORTH THEATRE Beech Walk, Crayford, DA1 4NP 01322 526390 bookings@the.gwt.org.uk
7th - 14th March **THE THRILL OF LOVE** by Amanda Whittington

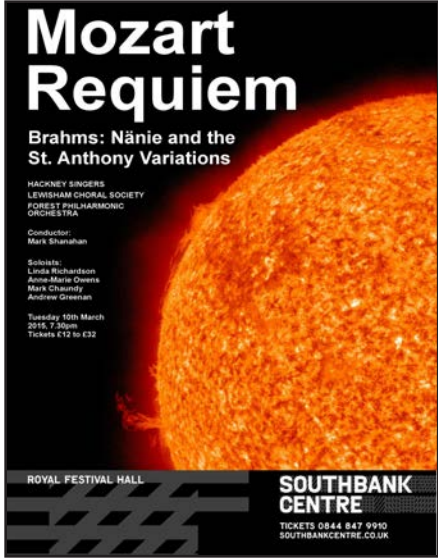
LONDON THEATRE 443 New Cross Road, Outer London, SE14 6TA (Near New Cross Station)
Box office 0208 694 1888
Thurs 5th March 8.00pm **JO BURKE** her brutally honest, no holds barred, stand up comedy show.
Tues 17th - Sun 22nd March 8pm (5pm Sunday)
WEIMAR KABARETT & JOY DIVISION Two plays: lesser known true stories of Nazi Germany.
Tuesday 24th - Sunday 29th March 8.00pm (5.00pm Sun) Venturewolf present Sheridan's **THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL.**

THE SPACE
Email: info@space.org.uk Tel: 020 7515 7799
269 Westferry Road, London E14 3RS
3rd - 14th March **THE COLLECTOR** by Mark Healey, based on the novel by John Fowles
14th March - 3rd April **VERNON GOD LITTLE**
Adapted by Tanya Ronder from DBC Pierre's novel

St George's

WESTCOMBE PARK

Sundays 11.00am Parish Communion
Tuesdays 7.00 pm Greenwich Winter Night Shelter (until the end of March)
Wednesdays at 8.30am Morning Prayer
12.30 pm Soup Lunch & Fellowship
Pilgrim Study course on the Beatitudes:
Wednesdays 1.30 at St. George's & 7.45pm at 3 Hardy Road
Thursdays 1.30 pm at Christchurch & 8.00 pm at 89 Westcombe Park Road
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Mon. 9th Mar. Annie Yim piano: Schumann etc.
Thur. 19th Mar. Eusebius Quartet: Haydn & Schumann
Mon 23rd Mar. Adele Paxton soprano & Sarah Down piano
Fri. 27th Mar. Minerva piano trio play Brahms
FRI 6 Mar. 7.30pm **TRINITY LABAN JAZZ ENSEMBLE** Jazz from the Swing to Bop eras
Recital Room Admission free but ticketed

BLACKHEATH HALLS Tel 020 8463 0100
Sunday Series for Classical Music Lovers
Sun. March 1st 11.00 am Naufal Mukumi piano plays Beethoven's Appassionata No.23 Op.57
Scriabin 12 etudes Op.8 Chopin Scherzos (Complete)
Tickets: £14 | £12 (Recital supported by Esta Finlay)
Sun. Mar. 15th 11.00 am Wihan Quartet
Schubert String Quartet No 10 Paganini 6 Caprices for String Quartet (arr. William Zinn) Dvorak Quartet in G Major Op 106 £14 | £12
Sun. Mar. 29th 11.00 am Benjamin Baker violin Robert Thompson piano Schubert Grand Duo in A major, for Violin and Piano, D.574
Ysaÿe Violin Sonata No.4 in E minor, Op.27 'Fritz Kreisler' Ernst The Last Rose of Summer (Étude No.6) Strauss Sonata for Violin and Piano in E flat major, Op.18 Tickets: £14 | £12



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FEATURES

The *WN* looks at

Shared ownership

Desperate to get on the property ladder, many people are going for shared ownership schemes, which are provided through housing associations.

Shared ownership schemes allow people on limited incomes to get on the property ladder by buying a stake in a house or flat which they can later increase when they can afford it. Usually, buyers start with a 25% or 50% share, and pay rent to a housing association for the remainder of the property.

You can only buy up to 75% of your home, but once you own 75%, you don't have to pay rent on the remaining share.

You'll need to take out a mortgage to pay for your share of the home's purchase price. Shared ownership properties are always leasehold.

Eligibility

You can buy a home through shared ownership if:

- * your household earns £60,000 a year or less (or £66,000 a year or less in London for a 1 or 2 bedroom property, or £80,000 a year or less in London for a 3 or more bedroom property)
- * you're a first-time buyer (or you used to own a home but can't afford one now)
- * you rent a council or housing association property

What's available

You need to contact London's Help to Buy Agent.* Some sample prices:

Love Lane, central Woolwich:
three bedroom apartment £415k;
one bedroom apartment: £273k

Locked in for life?

Outside London, under new government proposals, people in shared ownership homes will be allowed to sell them on the open market, rather than, as at present, giving the housing association first refusal.

That will still be the case in London: if you want to sell, the housing association has up to eight weeks to find a buyer, but all sorts of delays can then occur.

* <http://www.help2obuyLondon.co.uk/property-search/property-listing>



UNA BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH

To mark the UN's International Women's Day

All are invited to a public meeting on

What the UN is doing for women (and what it should be doing)

Illustrated talk by Jane Grant
followed by discussion

7.30pm Monday March 16th at
The Old Bake House Bennett Park
(behind Age Exchange)

(Refreshments 7.00 pm)
Info: 0208 858 8489

Should we be surprised that building firms are now actively marketing properties in Greenwich – Kidbrooke Village, Greenwich Square, and the like – in the Pacific Rim? Well, that is one of the penalties of being a global city.

However, MATT PENNYCOOK argues that there are limits . . .

What price regeneration?

Enveloped on three sides by the lower Thames, the Greenwich Peninsula is probably most familiar to Londoners as the home of the O2 arena. It is also the site of one of the capital's largest regeneration schemes with up to 10,010 new homes and 325,000 square metres of commercial floorspace earmarked for construction over a 25-year period.

Once home to a vast complex of heavy industry, this barren and heavily contaminated wasteland was selected in the late 1990s as the site for a flagship sustainable community. Decontaminated and remediated by English Partnerships, the original Peninsula vision was for a brand new London district – a stable, sustainable, integrated community linked to central London by the new Jubilee Line extension that would, once completed, stand as a totem of urban renaissance and a fine example of what a well-designed twenty-first century mixed community could be.

A decade and a half on, it's unclear whether that original vision can still be realised. After a long period of inactivity when, along with numerous other schemes in the Thames Gateway, development on the Peninsula stalled, the earthmovers are once again chewing up the soil.

Yet they're doing so in a very different context than the one in which the original Peninsula vision was conceived. The remorseless rise of house prices in the area, the steady influx of international capital, the Coalition Government's decision to cut the affordable housing grant by 60 per cent in 2010, the introduction of the "Affordable Rent" regime and a Mayoral administration that has been more than willing to relax its affordability targets and intervene in the planning process to ensure private development of any kind proceeds – all have made it much harder for local authorities to secure socially inclusive, integrated and sustainable regeneration.

And so it has played out on the Greenwich Peninsula. The arrival of Knight Dragon Developments Limited, a Hong Kong-based property developer, as sole owner of the site in 2013 quickly led to a welcome resumption of development after a prolonged period of inactivity.

However, Knight Dragon has a very different approach to regeneration: one that has led to the effective segregation of lower-income tenants from wealthy home-buyers through planning authorisations that have clustered new affordable homes onto the eastern side of the Peninsula away from the glittering towers of Canary Wharf.

Revised plan

Now Knight Dragon have signalled their intent to go one step further by applying for a revision of the 2004 Terry Farrell designed Greenwich masterplan – which set the framework for the comprehensive development of the site – in order to increase the number of total permitted

PHOTO:

Neville Grant



'units' from 10,010 to 15,497, many of which would be high-cost, high-density and high-rise, particularly those to the immediate west of the O2 arena.

Knight Dragon cannot be blamed for attempting to increase the number of luxury private homes for sale on the site. As a corporate developer Knight Dragon exists to maximise their profit. Like other developers in the capital, they are simply responding to signals from its insatiable property market – and a Mayor intent on achieving his London-wide target of 42,000 new units per year even if it means forgetting about affordability and breaching his own density guidelines (for example, Boris Johnson's intervention over Hutchison Whampoa's Convoys Wharf scheme, in which he ruled against Lewisham's call for a greater proportion of affordable homes).

Nor can these proposals simply be dismissed out of hand. In a global city that is facing an acute housing shortage – currently, Greenwich has over 14,000 people on our housing waiting list – there may well be some justification for an increase in homes, height and density, and Knight Dragon is right to argue that much has changed since the original Greenwich Peninsula development framework was approved.

However, will these proposals be of benefit to the local area and the local community, not just overseas investors and company profit margins?

In the negotiations that surround Knight Dragon's proposed revision of the 2004 masterplan compromises may be inevitable but any bargain made must be hard struck. The developers' assessments of viability must be approached with a critical eye and any proposed improvements to local infrastructure must be scrutinised carefully to ensure that they are sufficient to accommodate a significant increase in population.

Social integration

Most importantly, a commitment to creating a socially integrated community must be maintained vigorously. Regeneration of the Greenwich Peninsula cannot come at

any price: London is not Manhattan or Hong Kong and the local community will not tolerate the place they love being carpeted with scores of high-rise towers containing flats that their family members have little chance of ever living in.

Under the prevailing approach to regeneration in our capital even the most successful development project involves complex trade-offs but it's more important than ever that we hold onto the principles contained in the original Greenwich Peninsula vision – of a socially inclusive, stable and environmentally sustainable community that would be respectful of our common heritage and would create thousands of jobs, first-class social and community infrastructure and a vibrant public realm. In short, a development that benefits Londoners, not just overseas investors. *Cllr Matthew Pennycook represents the Greenwich West Ward on Greenwich Council and is Labour's Parliamentary Candidate for the Greenwich & Woolwich constituency. This article is an edited version of his blog that first appeared on Jan 26th on blogs.greenwich.co.uk*

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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

Air Quality Survey

ANNE ROBBINS outlines a new Westcombe Society initiative designed to measure air quality in our area.

In February, the *WN* raised serious concerns about air quality on our streets. Readers may be glad to hear that the Westcombe Society is now undertaking tests to determine levels of NO2 (nitrogen dioxide in the atmosphere in the area.

Some of you may have spotted people up ladders, fixing little tubes to lampposts with cable ties. These tubes look simple, but they are a great tool for collecting one particular type of pollutant: NO2.

NO2 is emitted by vehicle engines. It is invisible, but the particles can lodge deep in the lungs and affect the development of children, as well as adult health.

The Westcombe Society has organised teams of volunteers to put the tubes up, and take them down again at the end of the month-long study. Sites include local schools, busy road junctions, and, for purposes of comparison, baseline points where the air might be of good quality.

The tubes will be sent to Oxford for analysis, under the eye of the Network for Clean Air. Results will be available later in the spring. Watch this space!

Other local groups are also carrying out NO2 surveys, including the Slade Green Forum, the Central Charlton Residents Association, and the East Greenwich Residents Association. The hope is that together we can build a picture of the effects of traffic, ahead of any changes to the road systems in the area. Some of the proposed plans – such as the Ikea store and the Silvertown Tunnel – could have the unintended effect of increasing traffic on local roads. We will be able to show current levels of air pollution at particularly busy traffic areas, as well as at calmer points. Some places may exceed permitted levels of air pollution already. Future testing will show how that has changed, for worse or better, and we can use this information to ask for improvements. Anyone interested in finding out more or taking part should contact the Westcombe Society’s Environment Committee. on environment@westcombesociety.org. [Network for Clean Air website: <http://www.networkforcleanair.org.uk/clean-air.html>]

Local planning issues

ANNE ROBBINS reports

A number of issues have come up in meetings of the Westcombe Society Environment Committee including:

Foyle Road garages – a strong objection is being submitted against the proposed back-land development to replace the garages with two houses.

Basements Applications to excavate land under homes for basements (‘iceberg homes’) are increasing. These result in poor quality space with either no natural light or loss of garden for a light-well. We have asked Cllr Brighty to obtain a policy statement from the Council.

Siebert Road – TfL have again refused to install fencing to reduce noise pollution from traffic on the A102.

HACAN East (Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise): Newham Council has approved the extension of City Airport despite many objections.

Greenwich Line Users Group (GLUG): At a meeting in January, concern was expressed about access to Guys during the 18-month period from August 2016 when Greenwich line trains will not stop at London Bridge. Mike Gibson reported that Southeastern has put on 100 additional front line staff to help passengers with their journeys. He was asked if the timetable for the Blackheath/Greenwich lines could be revised to make a more useable interchange at Charlton.

Also, buses to North Greenwich are now even more crowded at peak times.



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John Payne

johnpayne.com

Enjoying the view of the A102!

In February, local residents were startled to see work had suddenly begun on the parapets on the bridge over the A102 in Charlton Road,

Many readers have complained about these temporary parapets erected by Transport for London (TfL) in 2014. What TfL calls “temporary fencing” is affixed to ugly concrete slabs.

These structures were put in place – without warning – for safety reasons, and although they have been effective, many considered them an eyesore, obstructing a splendid view over north Greenwich, Canary Wharf and towards the City.

For many months, officers from Greenwich Council have been pressing TfL to implement a permanent solution.

Good news at last! TfL plan to replace the old parapets and remove the temporary measures. Work on the bridge in Charlton Road began in mid-February and is likely to continue until 13th. March. A similar exercise on the bridge in Old Dover Road will start on 9th March, and is likely to continue until 3rd April.

Why the short notice? One theory: TfL wants to spend the residue of its budget before the financial year runs out . . .

Cllr Paul Morrissey told the *WN*: “According to Malcolm Smith, Principal

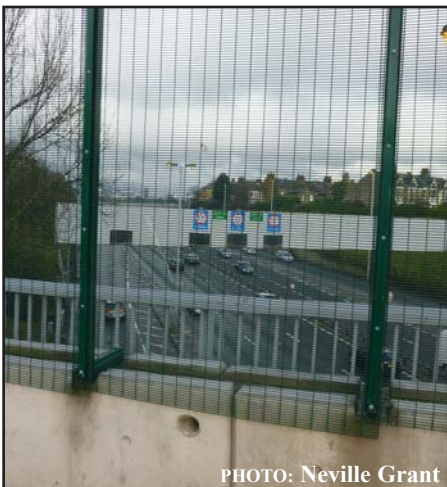


PHOTO: Neville Grant

Engineer Structures & Major Works in the Highways Department, the new parapets will be almost like-for-like in appearance both in form and colour to the old parapets (without the high mesh fencing) but will be almost a foot higher to provide additional safety, enabling pedestrians to enjoy the views without compromising safety.”

Residents are warned that there will be limited night work. Some footway closures on one side of the road or the other will be necessitated. In addition, temporary traffic lights will be required, at least during the daytime.

IKEA Update

MAGGIE GRAVELLE reports

Now that IKEA has been granted outline planning permission to go ahead with a new store on the Sainsbury’s site, they are beginning to write the ‘store brief’.

The company say that they want to open up the process to the local community and have therefore engaged a public relations consultant to hold a series of ‘workshops’ to which local organisations have been invited. Each of the three workshops had a theme but discussion ranged around a number of issues important to the local community.

Local organisations included East Greenwich Residents Association, Friends of Halstow School, The Bridge, who run the community cafe in the Pleasaunce, Greenwich Yacht Club, No IKEA Campaign, Greenwich Millennium Village Association, as well as other amenity groups such as the Westcombe Society. The main concerns coincided for almost all the participants. These were traffic, the design of the building and its surroundings, and sustainability and the environment more generally.

Members pointed out that congestion and pollution were already very high in the area and expressed doubts about the accuracy of IKEA’s traffic assessment. The expansion of the Peninsula development and the possibility of the Silvertown Tunnel are likely to increase traffic.

Doubts were also expressed about IKEA’s own estimate of the extent of public transport use. While the design of the Peartree Way roundabout was outside their control, the design of the store could have an impact on the amount of traffic.

IKEA were asked to consider, for example, making it easier for people who wanted small items which could be carried away, to fast-track through the store. If delivery charges were lower and car parking charges imposed, fewer people would be tempted to take goods home by car.

The representatives from IKEA were keen to stress their sustainability credentials. While they are not retaining the current ‘iconic’ building, they did stress the use of 100% re-cycled materials

and the importance of adaptability in the new design. They claimed to be open to ideas other than the traditional blue and yellow box, though in Hamburg the “box” was simply recreated in aluminium.

IKEA were more comfortable when talking about possible community projects which they could support. Suggestions about a creche and even a green area on the roof which might provide play space or a garden where vegetables could supply the cafe, were discussed. They were open to the suggestion of using local environmental experts in the design of an ecological sites to increase wildlife habitats.

So what are the next steps? Discussions and consultation continue through the spring and proposals will be produced in a few months. As one of the residents said, ‘We must stay firm and not get side-tracked by water taxis, creches, gardens/vegetable patches on roof tops; such offerings remain ‘nice-to-have’ but must not deflect from our main concerns’.

Meanwhile it will be possible to contact IKEA through the consultants (Sara Price, Corporate Reputation Consulting, 86 Great Suffolk St, London SE1 0BE, T: 020 7401 4840, M: 07961 801 204, www.crccommunications.co.uk).

PLANNING APPLICATIONS See also http://www.westcombesociety.org/
61 FOYLE ROAD ref 15/0093/F Construct single storey rear infill extension with loft conversion and rear dormer
49 RUTHIN ROAD ref 15/0066/F Construct 2-storey side extension, single storey rear extension, and loft conversion with 2 dormers
TREE WORKS
126-128 WESTCOMBE HILL ref 15/0427/TC Crown reduce 2 plane trees by 50% (front garden of 126) and fell sycamore (rear of 128)
19 CHARLTON ROAD ref 15/0447/TC Reduce London plane and Norway maple in rear garden to previous reduction points
3 VANBRUGH TERRACE ref 15/0334/TC Fell eucalyptus in front garden
48 HARDY ROAD ref 15/0405/TC Fell conifer in front garden
83 COLERAINE ROAD ref 15/0242/TC Fell 2 lime trees in front garden

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