Seven years ago saw the publication of The Spirit Level by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett. It demonstrated that more equal societies lead to longer and healthier lives, greater trust amongst its citizens and greater social mobility and innovations. Obviously, really.

As a result, the London Fairness Commission started work, and issued a report. This report contained a package of recommendations of ways the London Mayor can tackle these challenges, and make London fairer.

Readers who read the last issue of the FV learnt that they were among the least happy people in London (47%). So we will be relieved to hear that the Royal Borough of Greenwich has placed happiness near the top of the priority list, and have things well in hand.

The Royal Borough has established an independent Fairness Commission called Greenwich: our future together. The Commission will deliver “an objective independent evidence-based strategy” to tackle inequality and poverty in the borough focusing particularly on health, housing, employment (including training) and education.

Greenwich: our future together will be led by Anya Martin, Chair of Peabody, one of the oldest and largest housing associations in London. Loid Kerslake has experience in both central and local government, as former Head of the Civil Service and Chief Executive of the London Borough of Hounslow and Sheffield City Council. He also sits on the House of Lords Finance Committee.

The Commissioners have been drawn from a wide selection of local and national organisations and are experts in their respective fields across housing, education, employment and health. The work will be carried out over the next few months.

Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Councillor Denise Hyland said: “The Royal Borough of Greenwich is firmly committed to doing all it can to tackle social and economic inequality, fostering a strong cohesive community with fairness at its very core. “Greenwich: Our Future Together has the central aim of helping those trapped in poverty by ensuring that communities are given the right support, care and resources to prosper, and by identifying new ways of improving the quality of life for all residents.”

Any organisations wishing to give evidence or make representations to the Fairness Commission can do so via email to Anya.Martin@peabody.org.uk or Bakita.Kasadha@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

One idea to consider: earlier this year, development company Grosvenor and engineering firm Arup commissioned a report on “green facades” – living walls that can reduce pollution by up to a fifth. A trial scheme in Mayfair involves an 80 foot high structure planted with grass, flowers, strawberries and foliage. It can also cut noise pollution by 10 decibels, and is fitted with sensors measuring noise, air pollution, and temperature.

This may not in itself be sufficient: but a substantial barrier with a facade of foliage could put the Green back in Greenwich. The Siebert Road Residents Association deserves support! Ring Chris Bentley of SRRA on 07866 593 171.

New Fairness Commission

In the words of Tiny Tim in A Christmas Carol:

“God Bless us, Everyone!”

With this quotation from Charles Dickens’ novel, we are pleased to report the return after a year’s gap of the Westcombe Society’s Christmas Bazaar. Our usual venue in Blackheath High School was not available this year, and we are grateful to Invicta School for welcoming us to their brand new premises on Invicta Road.

Many thanks to all involved – the volunteers, sponsors, stall-holders, and above all the general public for supporting this popular event, which raised money for the Society’s Charity of the Year, the Mental Health Activity Trust. It was a great time to buy Christmas presents, while the children enjoyed face-painting and other activities, Punch & Judy and Santa’s Grotto.

Blackheath Village Day
This is on Sat 3rd December. The festivities begin with The King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery Kings Parade around 11.30. Lights on at 4.30pm.

Christmas Scam
The Trading Standards Office are making people aware of the following scam:
A card is posted through your door from a company called PDS (Parcel Delivery Service) saying that they were unable to deliver a parcel and that you need to contact them on 0006 6611911 (a Premium rate number). They will not call this number, as this is a mail scam originating from the USA. If you call this number and you start to hear a recorded message you will already have been billed £315 for the phone call. If you do receive a card with these details, then please contact Royal Mail Fraud on 020 7239 6653.

Cards for Good Causes will be at St Alfege’s daily until Monday Dec 19th 10.30am-4.30pm Mon to Sat and 11.5am-4.30pm Sundays. Also open 10:00 – 4:00 pm at Age Exchange until Saturday Dec 10th.

Handel Messiah
by candlelight
Sunday 4 December, 7pm
St Alfege Church,
The Christmas Bazaar

Thank you to Brown and Brooke for sponsoring the Christmas Tree in the Sundred.
Thank you to David Lloyd, Sue Clark Impressions, Charlton FC, Charters, Wright and Blackheath Group, Fitness for donating bids for our Silent Auction.
And thanks to all the local businesses and residents who gave items for our raffle or Hamper.

More gastronomic delights awaited inside: it was very hard to resist the superb collection of home-made mince pies, cakes and other delicacies.

Christmas Nativity

Last year, St John’s Church mounted a Nativity scene with over 600 members of the local community either taking part or coming along to watch. By popular demand, we are putting it on again this year – and it will be on Saturday 10th December starting at 3.00pm.

We are very sorry to report that our Nativity scene has been stolen from our church porch. The theft occurred overnight between Thursday evening and Friday morning. It is believed that the scene was taken from the porch of the church and then placed in a van.

The scene was made up of three figures: Mary, Joseph and Baby Jesus. Each figure was approximately 6 feet tall and dressed in traditional nativity costumes.

We would like to ask for the public’s help in locating this item. If anyone has seen or heard anything, please contact the police immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this matter.

Letters

From Malcolm Hardy
St John's Park

Further to my letter about street cleaning published in your September issue, I raised the question of St John’s Park (West) with one of our ward councillors. She took it up with officials who claimed that streets should be swept once a week and their response seems to have made her sceptical about my claim that St John’s Park had not been cleaned in months.

On 6th September two sweepers did make a half-hearted attempt to remove some leaves but left as much as they removed. Could it be that either contractors or Council employees are being paid for work that is not being done, subject to no checks by officials? This photo was taken yesterday; the drains have been blocked by a thick layer of leaves for months.

From Peter Denssey
Hardy Road

At a rough guess, I’d say it’s been more than three months since any pavement sweeping took place in the Westcombe Park area. Some items of rubbish have become like old friends, and I’ve had to give them names. More importantly, they are a specific person to whom we are prohibited. It is estimated that the cost could be between £1,000 and £2,000. Isn’t that a reasonable price to pay for the health of our children? Especially if the cost of maintaining the area was reduced.

Programme: Costing the Earth focused on the role that cruise ships have in creating pollution in the UK. The programme focused mainly on the cruise liner terminal at Enderby Wharf in Greenwich, and was very critical of both Greenwich Council and other authorities in the city for allowing the plan to go forward without proper safeguards.

The programme also looked at the role of the air pollution from cruise ships on the air of Southport. The diesel fuel used in these ships is some 10 times more toxic than what is used in motor vehicles.

So a cruise ship moored even for just one day at Enderby Wharf is clearly not going to help reduce air pollution in Greenwich, which already suffers badly from the problem.

As reported in a previous issue of the RV, the problem could be solved if shore-based energy sources were used - but Greenwich Council has said the cost would be prohibitive. It is estimated that the cost could be between £1.5 million. Isn’t that a reasonable price to pay to continue to finance the health of our children? Especially if the cost of maintaining the area was reduced.

Carol Singing
Mon. 19th Dec.
Meet at 7.15 pm at Mycenae House, for a 7.30 pm start. All – with and without instruments – are welcome to join in!

Followed by mulled wine & mince pies.

Raising funds for the Night Shelter.

From Myles Dove
Maze Hill

We are very sorry to report the demise of Molly, the Westcombe News cat, in November. Molly used to keep a weather eye on the piles of RVs waiting to be distributed, and always pressed those whom she knew to collect them. She will be much missed.

From Lizzy May
Maze Hill

We are very sorry to report the demise of Molly, the Westcombe News cat, in November. Molly used to keep a weather eye on the piles of RVs waiting to be distributed, and always pressed those whom she knew to collect them. She will be much missed.
Reducing air pollution... have your say

Air pollution is a worrying issue for people living or working in London. The most polluted roads nearby are Trafalgar Road and the approach roads to the Blackwall Tunnel, including the A2. It is estimated by the Environmental Research Group of King’s College London, that around 9,400 deaths per year in London are attributable to illnesses related to poor air quality.

The two pollutants of particular concern to public health in London are Nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and Particulate Matter.

- **Nitrogen dioxide**: At high concentrations, NO2 causes inflammation of the airways. Long-term exposure is associated with an increase in symptoms of bronchitis in asthmatic children and reduced lung development.

- **Particulate matter**: Long-term exposure contributes to the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, including lung cancer: the health impacts of small particles with a diameter of 10 microns or smaller are especially significant, as small particles can penetrate deep into the respiratory system.

**Source of pollutants:**
Road transport accounted for 50% of NO2 emissions in Greater London in 2013, aviation 8% and rail 3%. Of the 50% from road transport, diesel cars accounted for 24% of NO2 emissions, HGVs 21%, TFL buses 20%, vans and minibuses 12%, and petrol cars 12%.

Road transport was also the greatest source of Particulate Matter. Since his election in May this year, Sadiq Khan has given priority to improving air quality and detailed proposals have now been put forward for our views. These proposals include:

- An Emissions Surcharge
- An Ultra Low Emission Zone

**Emissions surcharge:**
The Mayor proposes to introduce this in October 2017 for the older, more polluting vehicles driving into and within central London. This would be in addition to the Congestion Charge. Vehicles will need to meet specified exhaust emission standards or pay a daily charge of £10.

The surcharge is intended to act as a stepping stone to the Ultra Low Emission Zone, when tighter vehicle emissions standards would come into force.

**Ultra Low Emission Zone:**
Tighter vehicle emissions standards are due to come into effect in 2020 for Central London and vehicles that do not comply with the standards will pay a daily charge, (£12.50 is the proposed charge). To further improve air quality, the Mayor wishes to introduce this sooner than 2020 and wants it to cover a larger area.

He would like to hear our views to three proposals:

- **Whether to bring forward the introduction of the Ultra Low Emission Zone for Central London to 2019**
- **Whether to extend the Ultra Low Emission Zone from Central London to 2019**
- **Whether to extend the Ultra Low Emission Zone from Central London to 2020**

It is estimated that London-wide measures for heavy vehicles would lead to a 30% reduction in NO2 emissions from road transport across London, and that extending the zone to the North and South Circular roads for all vehicles would lead to an overall 40% reduction.

**Which cars will be affected?**
Cars registered in 2005 or older are likely to be non-compliant with the standards and would have to be set for the Emissions Surcharge and for the Ultra Low Emission Zone.

**Dependent on feedback from the Consultation, and continuing feasibility work, the Mayor will decide whether these options should be pursued.**
You can have your say through the online survey at the end of the information website https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/environment/air-quality-consultation-phase-2. Alternatively, write to: FREEPPOST, TFL Consultations, Closing date: Dec 31st.

**FOOTNOTE:**
The Mayor has confirmed Volkswagen will pay £2.5m for missed congestion charge payments following the emissions-rigging scandal. The mayor said 80,000 VW engines fitted with "defeat devices" were registered in London.

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**Greenwich's Living Advent Calendar**

Below in its 10th year, the streets of Greenwich come to life in December with 24 unique window offerings in the lead up to Christmas. A newly decorated window will be revealed every day of Advent. The event features many different locations around Greenwich. It concludes with the Christmas Eve services at St. Alfege Church, the organiser of the event.

A newly decorated window will be revealed on each day of Advent (1-24 December). The windows will remain on display until January 2, 2017. A variety of media will be used for the windows, including models, sculptures, collages and multimedia installations. Walking around all the windows will take about 3 hours.

The Rev Chris Moody, the vicar of St. Alfege Church, creates a theme every year. The theme for 2016 was “Promised Time.” He said he was inspired by old hymn, “Thy Kingdom Come, O God”, which includes the lines:

> When comes the promised time
> That war shall be no more,
> And fear, and tears, and hate shall flee thy face before?

He said while länging is a painful and tiring emotion, the flip side of it is hope. “For there to be a "promised time", whether it be in our personal lives, all the way up to a benevolent change in world affairs, we hope against hope.”

All the details of Advent Windows, including the map for this year, are posted on the website www.adventwindows.com. Pamphlets and maps also will be available at the Tourist Information Centre, St. Alfege Church and West Greenwich Library. For further information, please contact: Mycenae, 19 Woolwich Church Road, London SE18 6AP (07935 741 755) or Rev Chris Moody, Vicar, St. Alfege Church (020 8853 0687).

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**Working for a Safer Greenwich**

Safer Greenwich is a new, independent organisation which is run by and for residents. Safer Greenwich runs the Greenwich Safer Neighbourhood Boards which meet regularly to hold the police to account and ensure communities are more closely involved in problem solving and crime prevention.

They also scrutinise the use of resources by the borough police to guarantee value for money while tackling the crime issues that matter most to the local community.

A public meeting took place in Woolwich in December, to give due notice in the WN. 1 December 2016. The meeting was a great opportunity for residents to hear more from their local police officers on the work they’re doing in the community and discuss some of the main crime issues facing the borough.

For more information on Safer Greenwich, please contact Joanne - joanne@ujan.co.uk or 020 8309 8231.
Panto-time with Pollard

B
coming at this year’s pantomime at Greenwich Theatre will reach new levels with the return of everyone’s favourite villain Anthony Spargo as Captain Hook in Peter Pan: A New Adventure. Anthony will be remembered and still loud-
ly hissed for his dastardly portrayal of the Sheriff of Nottingham in Robin Hood and as the cruel and calculating Count Francus in Red Riding Hood.

‘He made the role – Anthony’s the perfect villain,’ said James Hadrell, the theatre’s artistic and executive director. Andrew Pollard is once again lined up to write and direct Peter Pan: A New Adventure, but panto-punters are amusingly asking “But WHO is the Dame?”

The whole of Greenwich will breathe a sigh of relief to hear that the role of dame will be played by none other than Andrew Pollard! Oh no, he isn’t! Oh, yes he is! For the eleventh time! He and Anthony will be surrounded by a cast of ultra-talented newcomers with the overall emphasis very much on high quality musical theatre.

Among the cast are Rory Maguire, who has just finished a tour of Shrek the Musical, to play Peter Pan, and Krystal Dockery – who made her debut as Cinderella at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith, is Tinkerbell.

Wendy is played by Louise Young from Mamoru Mia and James McAllister, who has been touring the UK with Priscilla Queen of the Desert, will cup up in a host of under-the-sie roles.

Captain Hook’s slimy sidekick Smee is played by Sackie Osakonor. ‘He’s also a tasky black belt so Pete Pan will have to be on his toes,’ said James Hadrell, the theatre’s artistic and executive director. Andrew Pollard is once again lined up to write and direct Peter Pan: A New Adventure, but panto-punters are amusingly asking “But WHO is the Dame?”

Look who’s back in town!

J
oan Ruddock, former MP for Lewisham, has published Going Nowhere, a memoir of her personal and professional journey as a formidable campaigner, politician and champion of women’s rights and environmental rights. Joan rose to the highest level of government, holding key government positions, many high honours and becoming a member of the The Privy Council. Joan has also been part of many key local, national and international political campaigns of her time. CND, Greenham Common, Shelter, Climate Change, to name but a few. Joan thinks that her proudest professional moment was helping to impose carbon limits internationally, but she campaigned on many other issues, too.

Joan described her memoir as standing out from many of her contemporaries because it is a story of a woman in govern-
ment at a time when there were very few such women.

The book contains many interesting campaign stories – including that opposing the closure of Lewisham Hospital – and Joan hopes the book will appeal to all and particularly to women who might wish to follow a similar path.

Joan still maintains strong links with the area that was once her constituency. Joan's career has taken her across the globe, speaking and being involved in campaigns, locally nationally and interna-
tionally, some even involving the United Nations. This is a fascinating book which demonstrates Joan’s deep commitment to women's rights and her constituents.

Joan Ruddock's journey goes on as Chair of Friend Blackheath Halls and now trustee at The Albany Theatre and through her own involvement with a number of special local projects. You can hear an interview with Joan Ruddock on Maritime Radio’s website (www.maritimemaritimeaudio.com).
Keeping our NHS healthy...

Mary Greenwich residents were shocked by a report by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Woolwich following an unannounced inspection. It is well known locally that the A&E department in QEH is massively over-stretched, so it was not surprising that the CQC reported that A&E patients were being treated in corridors and chairs. The watchdog said that the hospital “requires improvement” after encountering a “series of problems”, among those noted during the visit:

- the deterioration of a patient with the deadly infectious sepsis during their inspection because of inadequate monitoring.
- some staff were also observed speaking “sharply” to patients.
- children in A&E were not always given the right range of checks.
- there were long waits in A&E.
- some patients had to wait in pain before they were able to be helped to use a commode.
- some had to wait two months to have their hair washed because hospital staff were too busy to help them.
- the inspectors commented: “The nurse in charge… said staff were often too busy to provide personal care and this meant some patients could go up to two months without having that.”

There were not enough staff for the volume of patients who would use A&E.

“Nurses have been consistently saying for several years that they are so stretched they often find they are unable to complete all the tasks on their shift.”

Staff morale

As so often happens, the press seized on the negative findings. Very few comments on how well the staff are coping under very difficult circumstances.

A recent patient at QEH interviewed by the P&V said: “I have nothing but praise for the staff on the ward I was in. [Ward 12] the staff were friendly, compassionate and professional. It is so easy for inspectors to find fault – indeed they have to justify their existence by finding fault. You never see a headline: ‘Staff praised for doing a superb job’.”

A member of hospital staff told the P&V: “The CQC is great at making criticisms – especially when it comes to soft targets like A&E departments, which are under huge pressure across the country; yet they offer only criticism, rather than solutions.”

Ministers’ ‘incompetent’ decision in 2010 to cut the number of nurse training places had helped create the staff shortages that are common across the NHS, Justin Madders said. (Charging university fees for those taking up nursing is likely to have mad progress since the last CQC inspection back in February 2013, and we are pleased that our staff received a rating of ‘good’ for providing a caring, kind, and compassionate service.”

“We recognise there is more to do and we have a detailed programme of making improvements … working with our partners in health and social care partners – and indeed the CQC themselves…”

Not acceptable

On examples of poor care highlighted in the media Claire Champion, Director of Nursing and Quality at QEH, commented: “The examples of poor care which are described in the CQC report are not acceptable and I was extremely disappointed when I learned about them. Since the CQC visit, our senior nursing team and I have worked to address the concerns highlighted in the report. We have also strengthened how we monitor standards of in-patient care through our quality ward rounds.

“I emphasise that I consider it to be gross misconduct. There is no excuse for a failure of care for patients to have to wear incontinence pads as staff say they do not have time to take them off, or for patients to have to wait such a long time to get their hair washed. We apologise to patients in these cases.

“The few examples of poor care cited in the CQC report do not reflect our overall standards and general performance across the Trust. As well as noting many cases of good care the CQC report praises the caring attitude of our emergency department staff. But we recognise that we need to get it right for every patient every time.”

Meanwhile, at Westminster...

The findings emerged as the House of Commons health select committee warned that hospitals could struggle to cope in the face of a winter crisis in 2015. "We will be ‘substantially more difficult’ than last year,” the report said.

In a report on how winter pressures affect A&E units, the cross-party group of MPs warned that many hospitals are failing to meet the target of treating 95% of emergency patients within four hours, so that patients safety is at risk.

“The winter of 2015-16 was mild and the flu vaccine worked. We heard of a four amongst leaders of acute NHS trusts that 2016 - 17 could be substantially more difficult,” the report said.

Philip Dunne, the health minister, said: “The NHS is better prepared for winter than ever before, with plans in place to help hospitals to cope with additional demand – and the NHS is performing well despite the pressure of an ageing population, with nine out of 10 people seen in A&E within four hours.”

Mycenae House – Reach-Out Project in Context & Impetus

Mycenae House, a vibrant community hub in the Greenwich area, fundamentally exists to support and help develop the communities of South East London. Over the last few years, as the services of the NHS and the Local Authority have become more stressed and vulnerable to austerity, we have seen an explosion in the numbers of people seeking all kinds of critical support and advice.

We have been looking at how we can be more supportive and responsive to people’s needs and to build closer links with the services delivering front line support. We have been in discussions with other local organisations, local councillors and other service providers. As a result we are pleased to announce a new strand of work and two initiatives that we hope will bring lasting benefit to our community. This new strand of work is expected to focus on older people, vulnerable and isolated people and people suffering with mental and physical health issues including Dementia and Alzheimer’s.

To begin this work the Vanbrugh Community Association agreed to fund a Project Managers post for one year. She or he will be based at Mycenae House, which will strengthen the service’s current programme and also find ways to build new services and partnerships. Secondly we wish to form an Local Community Partnership – an informal alliance of organisations and people whose work focuses on the more vulnerable people within our community and in supporting people’s needs.

To deliver this work, we are now in the process of recruiting a project manager. This role is basically a 12 month kick-starting initiative that aims to reduce social isolation and improve access to Wellbeing support for our community by devising and delivering a range of work we aim to make sustainable and long term. The role will:

1. Strengthen and develop the in-house programme of activities for the elderly, isolated and vulnerable community members. This will be done through making an analysis of need, opportunity and viability.

2. Instigate an alliance of symbiotic organisations, initiatives and individuals focusing on support for vulnerable people in our community. The group will look at ways to cooperate and strengthen their work in partnership.

3. Develop a sustainable model & plan to deliver this work over the long term. This is expected to include partnership development, project planning and applications funding.

4. Create a new outreach-reaching programme for Mycenae House based on community need.

Drama on our doorstep!

The Roan Theatre Company is making a return visit to Westcombe Park Theatre in Greenwich where it was first formed in 1927. By, for the first time, putting on a play at Mycenae House. The company will present live with an air Pump by Sheila Stephenson, and it is on from Sunday 11th - 14th at 7.45 each evening. The action of the play takes place in a house in 1799 — and in the same house 200 years later. Combining science, magic, murder and comedy, it was described by The Independent as ‘having energy, variety and intelligence’.

Several local actors, including a genuine ‘Old Roan’, will be appearing and the RTP hopes to attract more local audiences fol-

owing the performance. The RTP was last seen at the Bob Hope Theatre in Eltham with its very successful production of Great Expectations.
The Westcombe Society wish you all a Happy & Peaceful New Year

The stalls at the Christmas Bazaar this year were outstanding. They included hand-crafted Christmas decorations & cards, a wonderful collection of cushions and scarves made by disabled people in Tanzania, wonderful jars of jam and mincemeat, jewellery, books, art, cakes, and many other stalls.

RIGHT: Santa and his minder

The young and progressive Ch’ing Emperor are no longer in the familiar landscapes of Edwardian England. Instead, they tumble in the Orient could be at stake.

It’s the year 1906. Rumours abound that a deadly plot is hatching - not in the fog-ridden back-alleys of London’s Limehouse district or the sinister Devon moors of the Hound of the Baskervilles, but in faraway Peking.

Holmes’s task - discover whether a plot exists and if so, foil it.

But are the assassins targeting the young and progressive Ch’ing Emperor or his imperious aunt, the fearsome Empress Dowager Cixi?

The murder of either could spark a civil war. China’s fate and the interests of Britain’s Empire in the Orient could be at stake.

Holmes and Watson take up the mission with their customary confidence - until they find they are no longer in the familiar landscapes of Edwardian England. Instead, they tumble into the Alice In Wonderland world of the Forbidden City.

Contact:
Website: http://tim-symonds.co.uk/

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