



Westcombe NEWS

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July/August 2018 No. 6



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

Who are calling the shots?

WN Reporter

Local people are beginning to ask who are calling the shots when it comes to new developments in Greenwich.

The controversial plan to build a huge tower overshadowing the Greenwich Ecology Park on the peninsula is due to be submitted to the Council in July this year.

The park is home to 60 species of birds and bees, as well as dragonflies and butterflies, and the plan is strongly opposed by the Friends of Greenwich Ecology Park (FGEP). Labour's own councillors in Peninsula Ward are also against the plan.

The Ecology Park was created using £10million of public money as part of a major regeneration project, and park users claim that the development will overshadow the park and ruin it.

The Council gave outline permission to build the 20 storey tower, but such was the opposition that the developer reduced it to 13 storeys. The developer, Greenwich Millenium Village Ltd (GMVL) revised the plans, asserting that it was "important to balance the loss of new homes with the impact on the ecology park."

FGEP are still very worried about the impact the development will have on the ecology park – and are concerned that additional plans for two more towers have not been up for consultation.

Of the 66 units in the 13- storey tower, only four would be "affordable". A recurring feature of new developments in Greenwich is the small number of units that are genuinely affordable, or 'social

housing.' Developers claim that new building projects become "non-viable" if "too many" social or affordable units are embodied in the development.

Greenwich claims to have a good record on affordable housing, but critics point out that 'affordable' is a relative term: claims that many 'affordable' units are snapped up by foreign buyers for investment purposes cannot be verified.

In another case, Meyer Homes wants to build a huge 27 storey tower in General Gordon Square in Woolwich Town Centre.

After strong local opposition, Council officers recommended that the application be turned down – but the councillors were forced to delay their decision after Meyer Homes threatened legal action, in effect putting the frighteners on.

John Edwards, spokesman for Speak Out Woolwich (SOW), said that this was a "cynical ploy by Meyer Homes to give them more time to decide how to push this through for the sake of profit and against the wishes of local people."

Council officers gave eight reasons for rejecting the application, including

- * an excessive number of one- and two-bedroom units
- * the excessive height of the building
- * the shadow cast over adjoining areas

Local residents are now hoping that the Council will stick to its guns.

See also page 7: Planning system: "not fit for purpose"

FACT FILE: SOME BOROUGHES ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS . . .

AFFORDABILITY

An affordable unit is one available for 80% of the market price. According to the GLA's official DataStore, Greenwich has one of the best records in London on affordable homes: the trouble is very few Londoners can afford them . . .

SOCIAL HOUSING

23,250 new dwellings were completed in London in 2016/17 of which only 5,360 (23%) are social housing units. In Greenwich in 2016/17:

- * 1,560 dwellings were completed
- * Only 130 were completed by the Council or by Housing Associations
- * Only 8.3% of completions were some form of social housing
- * Only six other London boroughs built less social housing than Greenwich.

Source: Table 253 Housebuilding: permanent dwellings started and completed, by tenure and district, 2016-17; Department for Communities and Local Government

Last year £24 billion was spent on housing benefit; much of this money was paid to private landlords. There must be better ways of spending this money!



PHOTO: Neville Grant

What is to be done with the former Greenwich Town hall, which occupies a site on the corner of Greenwich High Road and Royal Hill? A Grade II listed building built in 1939, it has until this year been used by the Greenwich Dance Agency.

What has been described as the elegant clock tower is the most prominent feature of this Art Deco building. Apparently influenced by the work of the Dutch architect W. M. Dudok, Pevsner described it as "... the only town hall of any London borough to represent the style of our time adequately."

The reinforced concrete building is clad in brick and features flat roofs. The *WN* has been unable to find anyone who has scaled the tower. The Listed Buildings website says that "Interior: much altered in 1972-4, when floors inserted in council chamber area; entrance foyer with marble panels to walls and imperial staircase; assembly hall with round lights over panelled dado and plain balcony, medieval-inspired mural by Suddaby and Fryer."

Others are less polite about the building: some regard it as the ugliest building in Greenwich town. But it represents an important page in Greenwich's history. .

Today it stands empty except for a few squatters. Now Alan Watkins of the Greenwich Society has come up with a new plan: he points out that Greenwich doesn't have a town museum. Although Greenwich enjoys more magnificent buildings than most other London boroughs, it lacks a museum of Greenwich town itself – a people's history of the area.

The Tourist Information Centre does a fine job, but it cannot tell the whole story. The exhibitions at The Royal Greenwich Heritage Centre in Woolwich, cover Woolwich, but not Greenwich.

The Borough Halls could house a permanent display, utilising the Council's amazing collection of paintings, prints and artefacts, emphasising the people's history, as well as the industrial and technological developments. The display would provide an interpretation of Greenwich – the people and the town – from pre-history to the present day. It could also include a cafe and bookshop, children's educational facilities, and a space for lectures, music and film screenings, as well as other visitor facilities.

Alan's proposal has widespread support, and has been forwarded to Greenwich Council.

The Thames Path's Missing Link

The 'Missing Link' on the Thames Path as it weaves through Royal Greenwich was officially opened on 20th June.

Until June, a break in the Thames Path at Charlton has meant that cyclists and walkers were diverted inland onto the busy Woolwich Road.

At the opening, a number of local walkers and cyclists attended, to celebrate being the first people to use the new connection.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport said: "This is a project that I know is close to the hearts of local people.

"This has removed the last barrier on the path from Thamesmead to Greenwich."

Royal Greenwich has the longest continuous waterfront of any London borough. The Thames Path runs alongside the river and for the most part is free of traffic.

< < Newsbriefs > >

Blackheath Fireworks

"Remember, remember the Fifth of November.

Gunpowder Treason and – STOP That is the danger: fireworks night on the heath in November, attended by more than 80,000 people, may have been the last to be held: Lewisham Council, which funds the event, has said the future may be in jeopardy for financial reasons, and is asking for donations from local residents and businesses. The council faces a 63% cut in government funding by 2020.

Greenwich Council has made a small contribution to the costs. Donations may be made at Age Exchange in Blackheath Village.

Correction

Cllr David Gardner is Deputy Leader of the Council, not "Leader of Children's Services for Greenwich" as stated in June's *WN*.

Capital Quay

In response to a Parliamentary question from local MP Matt Pennycook, Housing Secretary James Brokenshire stated that the developer behind Greenwich's New Capital Quay development should be paying for its flammable cladding to be replaced. This will be a relief to New Capital Quay's 2,000 residents.

Pioneering women

A special edition of the Antique Roadshow on "Pioneering Women" was shown on the BBC TV on June 10th. The programme celebrated the victories of the huge range of pioneering women who have shaped our nation. It featured among others war correspondent Clare Hollingworth, the Dagenham Equal Pay pioneers, Violette Szabo, who died while serving SOE in WW2, Margaret Thatcher, Diane Abbott. and Millicent Fawcett, whose statue was

recently unveiled in Parliament Square. At the end of the programme, local author Jane Grant displayed a brooch awarded to Millicent in 1913 in recognition of her work in obtaining the women's vote. The url is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQXgkM-typo>

Hervey Road

Funding of an additional £100,000 from the London Marathon Charitable Trust has been awarded to carry out works to the playing fields at Hervey Road, part of plans by the Royal Borough of Greenwich to build a new pavilion and bring improved local sports facilities to the area.

St Alfeges 300

On June 23rd, a Thomas Tallis Society concert took place to mark the tercentenary of the rededication of St Alfeges's church after the

rebuilding of the church by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Included in the concert was one of Jonathan Dove's choral works.

Oh for the wings of a dove . . .

Spectators were entranced by artist Duke Riley's epic outdoor work in June: 1500 trained pigeons, released from their purpose-built coop, soared into the night-sky above the River Thames in a spectacle of unprecedented scale and beauty.

Each pigeon wore a tiny LED light, and as the birds soared and swooped over Greenwich, they formed an ever-changing pattern of great beauty.

Riley's world-class installation was recreated for London's historical military location of Thamesmead. Its purpose was to pay beautiful homage to some of the First World War's unsung heroes who played crucial roles, delivering messages, often flying at night to escape enemy snipers.

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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http://westcombe.blogspot.com*

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London, SE3 7SE

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Volunteer Centre Greenwich

The VCG has been selected as the Westcombe Society's charity of the year for 2018 - 19.

The Westcombe Society's Charity of the Year for 2018/19 is the Volunteer Centre Greenwich. The centre uses volunteering to improve the lives of individuals and enrich the community, and the Westcombe Society contribution will help the centre to continue with this valuable work.

The funding will be used to re-accredit one of the centre's quality marks so that they can continue to deliver mentoring and befriending training and services. It will also be used to update and purchase some crucial IT equipment.

The Volunteer Centre Greenwich promotes the value of volunteers and volunteering in the Royal Borough of Greenwich, and ensures equality of access to volunteering for all people.

They do this by:

- Promoting volunteering to disadvantaged groups and individuals
- Providing information and support to all people seeking volunteering opportunities
- Providing information and support to organisations seeking volunteers
- Providing support and training to

volunteers and those who work with volunteers

- Promoting good practice around volunteering

They offer a signposting service for people in Greenwich wishing to undertake voluntary work through a database of voluntary opportunities and they offer a range of membership services to not for profits organisations These include giving information, training and advice on recruiting, managing and good practice in the best use of volunteers.

Volunteering can change people's lives by giving the skills, confidence and experience needed to progress to a career, improve health and wellbeing and reduce isolation.

The Volunteer Centre Greenwich is based at 10 Woolwich New Rd, London SE18 6AB. If anyone is interested in finding out about local volunteering opportunities or you wish to register your organisation, please contact the Volunteer Centre Greenwich on 020 8317 3817 email; info@volunteersgreenwich.co.uk Website: www.vcgreenwich.org.uk

It's all go at the Bridge

A thriving hub of the community the Council-run One O'Clock Club was saved from permanent closure by volunteers in September 2011.

A Community Interest Company (CIC) was formed and the centre was re-launched in April 2012 in its present state. It was entirely volunteer-run for the first two years but rapid growth and successful fundraising led to the employment of a part-time General Manager to oversee administration duties and further expansion and fundraising.

The centre still relies heavily on volunteers in many different capacities, from playgroup supervision to accounting, communications and event organisation.

As a result, The Bridge has become a thriving hub of the community, providing training support for local people who have taken a career break and are looking to

re-enter the workspace. It's also a popular launch-pad for local businesses.

The Bridge consists of a large indoor play room with adjoining kitchen, adult and child toilet facilities and store rooms, set within a secure enclosed area. It has its own playground and outdoor play equipment suitable for under-fives.

The next plan is to build a log-cabin play space for three to eleven year olds in East Greenwich Pleasaunce, to add to the existing playground and forest school area. The floor would be a rubber-mulch play surface for health and safety reasons.

The aim is to provide a safe green space for families to enjoy in an environment free from traffic fumes and congestion.

The centre always appreciates offers of help from individual volunteers and local businesses.



Letters

Any views expressed are not necessarily those of either the Westcombe Society, or the *Westcombe News*.

G. Bailey Humber Road

It was good to see the coverage of the unveiling of the first statue of a woman in Parliament Square. No one denies that Millicent Fawcett, who went to school in Blackheath, deserves her place in Parliament Square amid all those men.

But she is not the only connection with Blackheath. John Stuart Mill, who strongly supported women's rights, lived here, too.

Greenwich should consider erecting a memorial to all those who lived locally, and fought for women's rights through the ages.

Among them: the wheelchair suffragette, Rosa Billinghurst, born in Granville Park, highlighted in the *WN* in Nov. 2013; and Emily Wilding Davison, born in Vanbrugh Park, who died at the Epsom Derby in 1913.

Then there was Edith Bessie New, who lived for a time in Hyde Vale: she was one of the first militant suffragettes to be arrested – for throwing stones at 10, Downing Street; also Mabel Tuke born in Plumstead, who was the Honorary Secretary of the National WSPU at its London headquarters.

Many other women locally played a part in campaigns on women's issues, as suffragettes suffragists, or as modern feminists: most recently, Mary Stott, who played a pioneering part in women's journalism and feminist issues, and Jane Grant, who founded the National Alliance of Women's Organisations. (NAWO)

Inter-Generation Book Project at The John Roan School

Next academic year, starting in September, the libraries at The John Roan School would like to set up a new Inter-Generation Book Project.

This would involve setting up times when our students and local older residents can get together to discuss the books that they enjoyed when they were younger, and what they enjoy reading now.

We'd then like to create a time capsule, to include some extracts from the books discussed, written recommendations and comments, photos etc.

We are looking for anyone who would be happy to meet with our students to discuss books and their reading likes and dislikes..

If you would like more information please contact Jenny Allen Librarian at The John Roan School Jallen@Thejohnroan.greenwich.sch.uk

In Memoriam

Beryl Platts. A memorial service for Beryl Platts was held at St Alfege's Church on Friday May 25th. Beryl Platts (née Seaton) died peacefully at home on January 15th, aged 104. A writer and historian, Beryl Platts was the author of a number of books, including *A History of Greenwich* and *The Origins of Heraldry*.

However, she was better known locally for her involvement in the campaign against a proposal to drive a motorway through the centre of Greenwich, which led to the formation of the Friends of Geenwich.

The Widow of J A C Platts, Beryl Platts was the mother of Elizabeth and John, and had two grandchildren, Olivia and Sarah.

Peter Lewins. We are sorry to record the death after a long illness of Dr Peter Lewins who acted as membership secretary of the Westcome Society for a period. We send Jo and the family our deepest sympathy.

Margaret Skeates was one of the founder members of the Westcombe Society. She ran the Events Committee for several years in the early days, and she started the Craft Fair in Kidbrooke House (as Mycenae House was then named) which she ran for some twenty years. (This was the forerunner to the Christmas Bazaar.)

She died about a month ago in Greenwich and Bexley Hospice after a long illness. Margaret was married to an architect, and they built a house for themselves in Vanbrugh Hill (no. 2A) where they lived for some years before moving to Sussex. After her husband's death she moved back to Greenwich.

Harold Marchant's memorial service took place at St Alfege's on Monday 25th June. Harold was an active member of the Greenwich Society, and the West Greenwich Graffiti Removal Group. Our condolences to his wife Clare.

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LOCAL NEWS

Local Councils: the solution – or part of the problem?

Following this issue’s headline about residential development in Greenwich, the WN provides here an overview of housing developments across London.

The background: in an attempt to reduce public borrowing and expenditure, the government has been applying a massive squeeze on local government finances, making it increasingly hard to maintain local services. Lord Porter estimates that by 2020 the funding gap will exceed £5bn.

To alleviate the pressure, and mainly to

finance social care, the government has allowed councils to raise the community charge; but this alone does not pay for the increasing burden of social care, let alone funding house-building.

Housing Associations were supposed to take up the slack in the housing sector, but have been ill-equipped to do so.

The figures below (for 2016/17) provide a picture of how different councils have tried to overcome financial and legal constraints to improve the housing stock.

	Total of dwellings completed in 2016/17	Dwellings completed in 2016/17 by Housing Associations & Local Authorities	% of total Social Housing
London overall:	23,250	5,360	23.1
1 Croydon	3,670	90	2.5
2 Southwark	2,210	470	21.3
3 Barnet*	1,980	710	35.9
4 Newham	1,710	420	24.6
5 Greenwich	1,560	130	8.3
6 T. Hamlets	1,540	450	29.2
7 Walt. Forest	810	440	54.3
8 Wandsworth	760	150	19.7
9 Hackney	740	380	51.4
10 Hounslow	720	220	30.6
11 Brent	690	120	17.4
12 Lewisham	670	250	37.3
13 Hillingdon	570	50	8.8
14 Redbridge	570	50	8.8
15 Ealing	500	180	36.0
16 Hammersmith & Fulham	470	60	12.8
17 Bromley	460	90	19.6
18 Lambeth	390	80	20.5
19 Sutton	380	70	18.4
20 Enfield	370	300	81.1
21 Barking & Dagenham	360	210	58.3
22 Camden	350	60	17.1
23 Bexley	330	110	33.3
24 Westminster	240	140	58.3
25 Haringey	230	20	8.7
26 Islington	220	30	13.6
27 Merton	150	10	6.7
28 Richmond	140	30	21.4
29 Havering	240	10	7.1
30 Harrow	130	0	0.0
31 Kensington & Chelsea	110	30	27.3
32 Kingston	70	0	0.0
33 The City	10	0	0.0

Source: Table 253 Housebuilding: permanent dwellings started and completed, by tenure and district, 2016-17; Department for Communities and Local Government

Girls raise funds for NSPCC

Journalist and television presenter Dame Esther Rantzen DBE paid tribute to the fundraising efforts of Blackheath High Junior School girls who have raised an impressive £6500 for the children’s charity, the NSPCC.

On a visit to the school on 24th May, the ChildLine Founder and NSPCC Trustee congratulated the girls for their efforts which included a series of fundraising activities across the school including a sponsored Maths coding challenge.

As well as thanking the girls, Esther spoke about her own personal experiences over the last 50 years in TV show business. Reflecting on her success in a male

dominated industry, she wholeheartedly encouraged the girls not to be afraid to fail and that their resilience and perseverance to succeed would pay dividends.

She said: “Going to an all-girls school was the foundation for my drive and enabled me to become a strong female lead at a time when the TV industry was very male dominated.”

Mrs Sarah Skevington, Head of Blackheath High Junior School, said: “I am very proud of the fundraising efforts of our girls. The children have been learning about the vital work of the NSPCC and were immediately keen to do their part, fundraising tirelessly for the charity.”:

Has education lost its way?

‘Education’ actually means the induction of youth into the core of the historic classless culture. This isn’t simple. We need first to de-toxify it by removing ancient strands of imperialism, sexism and racism. We need second to energise it by adding new, enduring stuff – modelling with digital electronics. Many educationalists lean towards the left and they conflate the historic classless culture with the current Status Quo – which they hate. The historic classless culture of the UK is about common law, commonsense, and a freedom to think deeply which was stamped out in most other countries. This is needed. A society which neglects its core values falls apart. The P E R Group websites: www.philosophyforeducation.co.uk. www.perprospero.co.uk

Please trim those hedges!

The growing season has surely arrived and in some places footpaths and pavements have become obstructed by overhanging hedges and tree branches.

The owner or occupier of a property has a legal responsibility (Highway Act 1980 s154) to ensure the ‘public highway’ adjacent to a property is not obstructed by vegetation from their property. Equally local authorities have a duty to ensure that public highways and street lights are unobstructed.

So, how about it, Greenwich Council?



New MOT tests changes

Drivers should be aware that the MOT test was revised in May. One of the changes is the way faults are classified.

They are now to be categorised as being Dangerous, Major and Minor. Minor issues are recorded, and the owner is advised to get them fixed – but the car will still pass its test. These faults will also be added to the car’s MOT certificate and online record.

Anything resulting in a Dangerous or Major classification will mean an outright fail.

A Minor issue would be a problem such as oil leaking from a steering box. However, this would escalate to a Major if the leak was so bad as to be dripping.

The MOT test sees tougher measures against diesel cars through a variety of new

defect categories. For example, if your diesel car puts out any smoke whatsoever, it won’t pass its MOT examination.

Testers are also required to do thorough checks of a car’s DPF (Diesel Particulate Filter) to make sure they haven’t been tampered with – or removed entirely.

The guidelines read that: “Any vehicles fitted with a DPF should be checked so that no visible smoke is emitted from the exhaust during the metered check.”

Some diesel drivers have been known to remove the filter to boost performance and increase miles-per-gallon, but since it regulates the exhaust gases produced by the engine, removal increases pollution.

So if a car was fitted with a DPF as standard, its removal would mean an instant MOT fail.

Gambling: Our children’s future is at stake

Problem gambling affects some 430,000 people in Britain. In 2015-16 there were 230,000 individual sessions on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) in which a user lost more than £1000. The losses so incurred are often by those at the lower end of the income scale.

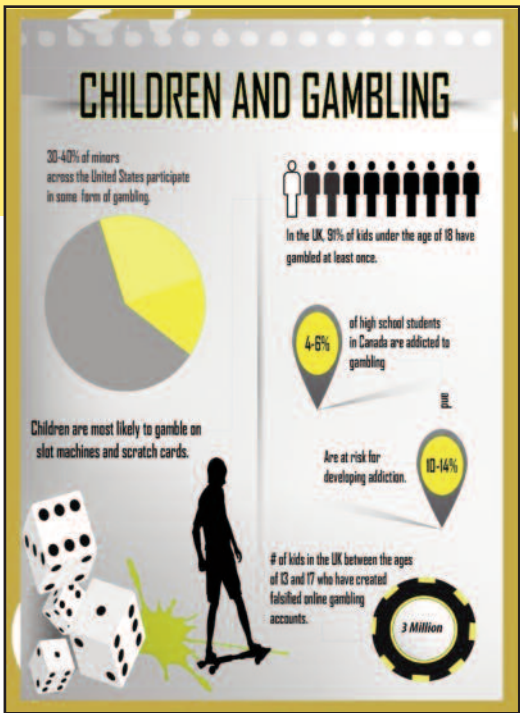
This is not just a tragedy for the gamblers themselves – and their families: the Centre for Economic and Business Research (CEBR) think tank reported that problem gambling carries a huge economic and social cost. This amounts to £1.5 billion a year because of its impact on employment, mental health and financial stability.

FOBTs in particular can be addictive. For these reasons, many have welcomed the government’s decision to reduce the maximum stake from £100.00 to £2.00.

But the problem doesn’t just affect adults: according to an alarming 2016 report by the Gambling Commission, a Government regulatory body, some 450,000 children aged between 11 and 15 are gambling on a weekly basis,

Earlier this year, the Demos think tank in partnership with GambleAware launched Demos’ new report *Reducing the Odds: An Education Pilot to Prevent Gambling Related Harm*.

Demos has been piloting educational resources in secondary schools as part of



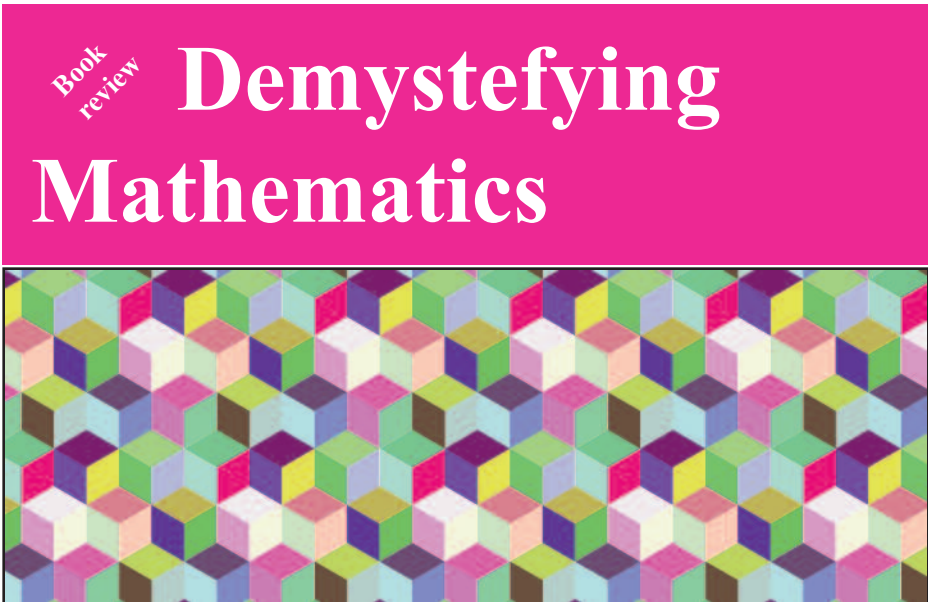
wider efforts to help prevent gambling-related harm. The resources comprise four lessons to produce a programme of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) provision for 15 year-olds.

They encourage pupils to weigh risk, identify manipulative behaviour, manage impulses and help others. They cover a range of ‘risky behaviours’, but with gambling as a major case study.

Policy makers, politicians, and the media were brought together at a launch event to engage with this research project, and discuss the future of gambling prevention education for young people.

Needless to say, parents or guardians and teachers share crucial roles.

FEATURES



Most of us coped with our tables: easy-peasy – though purists would complain that we learnt them parrot-fashion without understanding ‘the concept of number.’

The concept of number? No time for that, as we launched into the basics of arithmetic – adding, subtracting, dividing and multiplying; with pounds shillings and pence (remember them?) thrown in for good (or bad) measure. Long division: tricky. Equations: help!

Then came what was laughingly called “applied maths”: “if two men mowed a hundred acre meadow in three hours, how long would it take five men?” Gulp.

This is where the present reviewer is coming from, and it was thus with some trepidation that he picked up this book *The Battle for Infinity* by local author Christopher Ormell. The title looked daunting: what after all does infinity mean to the man (or woman) in the street?

But the subheading looked much more promising: “Should mathematics be up in the clouds, or on the high ground with the finest views?” This grabbed the attention of this semi-numerate reader.

Christopher Ormell is well-known as a former lecturer in mathematics, and chair of the local group Philosophy for Educational Renewal. In his preface, he states:

“Mathematics enables us to form rational overviews of many things. However, the question arises ‘How high should we go to get these valuable overviews?’”

He points out that over the last hundred years, there has been a tendency for pure mathematics “to go higher and higher, ever upward ... towards forms of hyper-abstraction which are, from the ordinary person’s point of view – unimaginably rarified, abstruse and difficult.”

In short, mathematics needed to be protected from professional mathematicians: “For the ablest professionals, the lure of the abstract stratosphere has proved well-nigh irresistible.” But for that notional woman or man in the street, the message they send back to earth is almost unintelligible. Ormell argues that the lure of the stratosphere came about mainly as a result of a new, exotic, fantastic theory of infinity developed more than a hundred years ago, and professional mathematicians have remained under its thrall ever since.

The result: mathematics has become “glorious” from the point of view of its insiders; but the cost has been a gradual erosion of support from the general public. Arguably, the teaching and learning of maths has never fully recovered from the cult of “New Maths” fifty or so (very) odd years ago, when children as young as five were to be introduced to maths via set theory, binary operations, transformations, groups etc. In those heady days, trendy mathematicians announced that “ $2 + 2$ no longer necessarily equalled 4 ... “

The trendies collapsed in the USA by the end of the sixties; a conference of mathematicians at the University of Nottingham in 1972 saw its death knell in the UK. But ever since this period, maths has very largely lost its credibility with the general public.

Ormell’s book argues that “a belated return to un-intoxicated thinking about the purpose, practice and meaning of mathematics is urgently required.”

This book is not an easy read: but it is an important read for any teacher of maths, for anyone who aspires to be a professional mathematician — and for anyone who appreciates the beauty of mathematics. **The book can be obtained from Chris Ormell at 3 Ingleside Grove SE3.**

Following her memoir of her work with UNICEF in the Yugoslav Civil War, local author Stephanie Early recalls her years of innocence in post Civil War Spain . . .

Review by
VESNA DOMANY HARDY

This beautifully written memoir depicts an episode in the author’s life during her teenage years in the 1950’s. At this time, Andalusia was suffering the aftermath of the bloody Spanish Civil war (1936-39) and was held in the firm grip of Franco’s cruel dictatorship.

Far away from her family and friends in her native Dublin, Stephanie Allen Early spent two years as an English language “Miss” in the household of a sherry-producing, noble family in Jerez de la Frontera.

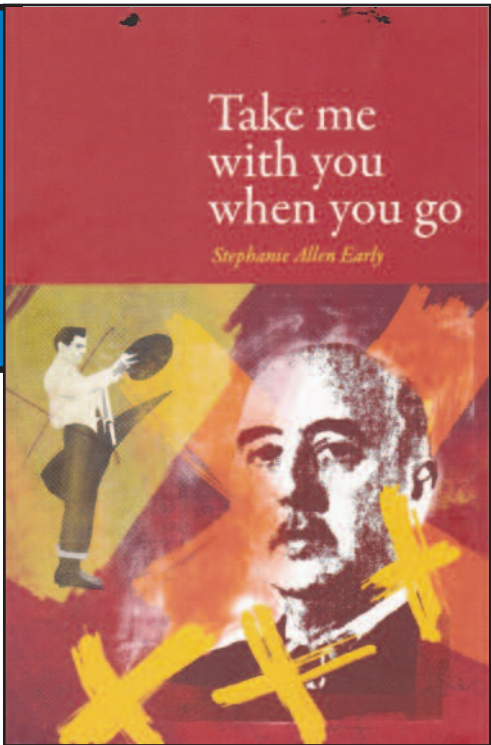
The author learnt to speak Spanish during that painfully hard time spent at a crucial period in her development. The experience marked her profoundly and was the start of a lifelong association with Spain and the Hispanic world.

The experience remained imprinted on her memory, so that even sixty years later, she has been able to revive in detailed fresh tones the tedium of daily existence for women in an enclosed household in Andalusia.

Stephanie gives a non-judgmental account of her sojourn, frequently self-ironical, as she narrates from the point of view of her 16-year-old self.

Reading between the lines, one discovers that even coming from the oppressive Catholic Ireland of the De Valera period, the enclosed and uneventful life in more backward Jerez feels like prison to the free-spirited girl.

Time has been turned back with the Fascist victory, all progress has been arrested and all freedoms curtailed.



For the women of the *palacio* the only activity in which they can participate – apart from domestic tasks and caring for children – is within the confines of the Catholic Church. Survival depends on conformity to strict Catholic rules.

Rebellion becomes inevitable as the girl’s role becomes unsustainable. The hopeless situation endured by local inhabitants is well illustrated in the many letters written to the young Stephanie by her Spanish friend, Javier, a bull-fighter.

While dreaming of escape from the confined conditions of his impossible existence, he sees his friendship with this young Irish girl as a possible way forward – although he sees his role as a *torero* as being a kind of metaphor for “man/woman relationships”. His letters add another dimension to this interesting and charming memoir. Will she or won’t she succumb to his entreaties?

Highly recommended.

***Take me with you when you go* is obtainable from Waterstones, Amazon, and Troubador, 8 Priory Business Park, Wistow Road, Kibworth Beauchamp, Leics. LE8 0RX
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WHAT'S ON



THE ARTS

BLACKHEATH ARTS SOCIETY

All meetings are on the 4th Thursday of each month (EXCEPT AUGUST AND DECEMBER), and start at 2.00pm with tea and coffee, and lectures at 2.30. Our lecture venue is St Mary's Church Hall, Cresswell Park, Blackheath. Next talk: **26th July Anthea Streeter** talks on **THOMAS HEATHERWICK** Visitors welcome **THE ARTS SOCIETY GREENWICH** Our lectures take place in King William Court at the University of Greenwich, on the Old Royal Naval College site. Parking in the car park accessed from Park Row. Next meeting: **9th July SIR ANTHONY VAN DYCK - Rosalind Whyte** Visitors welcome

CHILDREN & FAMILY

GREENWICH THEATRE CROOMS HILL
Wed. 15th - Sun 26th August UK premiere of THE JUNGLE BOOK by Rudyard Kipling. Directed by James Haddrell The classic tale with thrilling percussion, vibrant puppetry + all of Kipling's inimitable characters
SHERINGTON CHILDREN'S CENTRE, Tel. 0208 - 3053140 - 14, Sherington Road SE7 7JW
DAD'S STAY AND PLAY session every Wednesday, 1.00pm -2.30pm -free drop in Sherington Children's Centre, all home dads welcome Each 2nd Saturday of the month - 10.00am -11.30am - free brunch/arts and craft Contact Daniel.hall1985@hotmail.co.uk
MYCENAE HOUSE
Tues 24th - Thurs 26th July 9am-3pm - Music Maestros. 3 day holiday music course at Mycenae House for children 7+, £90 for 3 days, book via info@thefuturemusicgroup.co.uk
THE HORNIMAN MUSEUM
COLOUR: The RAINBOW REVEALED
Until October 28th:
This interactive exhibition explores the science of colour through hands-on exhibits and exciting games and challenges. Visitors can explore the fascinating ways it is used in nature, art and culture around the world. Why does a red toadstool have white spots? Why does a tiger have black stripes?
www.horniman.ac.uk
THE 02 Sat 14th July THE MUPPETS
GLOBAL FUSION of MUSIC and the ARTS
Sun. 22nd July Noon- 5..00pm **CHARLTON COMMUNITY FUN DAY**

SPOKEN WORD

IN-WORDS
Tuesday July 3rd at The Knowledge Centre (British Library, Euston Road): in collaboration with Vanessa Lee-Miller - 'At First Sight - floating islands, floating lands'. An evening of story-telling, poetry & music inspired by the Library's acclaimed **James Cook, the Voyages'** exhibition. 7-8.15. £10, £8 (over 60s), £7 (other concessions). We are so excited by this collaboration and by working with the British Library.

Visit in-words.co.uk for more information.

THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

Fri 28th September - MacMillan Coffee Morning
Sat 10th November - Quiz 7.30-10.30pm
Sat 17th November **Christmas Bazaar**
Blackheath High School for Girls, Mycenae Road entrance.

We need more volunteers to help out at community events being planned for 2018. Interested? Please ring Joanne on 07709 571777

COMMUNITY

BLACKHEATH & GREENWICH WOMEN'S INSTITUTE Meets first Wednesday of every month, doors open at 7.00pm for 7.30pm at Sunfields Methodist Church on Old Dover Road
BLACKHEATH BRIDGE CLUB duplicate sessions in Mycenae House Mon & Thurs 7.15pm and on Wed at 1.15pm. Newcomers welcome. Tuesday evening lessons start anew in September. Tel. Ron 8319 1312
CHARLTON HOUSE www.charltonhouse 0208 -856 -3001 Mulberry Tea Rooms
Jacobean Entrance Hall Mon-Fri 9am- 4pm
Lunchtime concert every Friday 1.00pm - 2.00pm
SUNDAYS AT SUNFIELDS at Sunfields Methodist Church 95 Old Dover Road, Blackheath SE3 8SJ 1.00 - 4.00 pm ALL older people and their carers are welcome to join us for lunch and lighthearted activities, including reminiscence, arts and music. We are experienced in supporting those who may have extra needs. Carers are also invited. Please do just come along - there is no need to book. FREE

THEATRE

THE GREENWICH THEATRE, Crooms Hill, London SE10 8ES Box Office: 8858 7755
Mon 23rd -Sat 28th July 7.30 pm Wed & Sat. matinee 2.30 pm. IOLANTHE One of Gilbert & Sullivan's best. £26-£21.0 | concs.
Tues. 31st July 0 Sat 11th August 7.30 pm EIGENGRAU "the colour seen by the eye in perfect darkness". Four people discover the truth about themselves. A whirlwind of a play by Penelope Skinner.
THE CUTTY SARK THEATRE 6th - 29th July* PRE-EDINBURGH COMEDY FESTIVAL
This July sees the return of the festival for its fourth consecutive year with brand new material from some of today's hottest comedians. See the stars of the future on the way up in one of London's most unique venues - the Michael Edwards Studio Theatre on board Cutty Sark.
Tickets 12.00 from rmg.co.uk/cuttysarktheatre
* Dates to be confirmed

G+D INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

Royal Greenwich Festivals leaflets with details of what's on are available from The Woolwich Centre Library, The Eltham Centre, Greenwich Centre and Plumstead Library. For information visit www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/festivals



BLACKHEATH HALLS OPERA
2018
DIDO and AENEAS
Henry Purcell

Blackheath Halls Opera's intergenerational company and Trinity Laban students work with professional opera singers, including German mezzosoprano Idunnu Münch who makes her London debut as Dido & Marcus Farnsworth as the Trojan hero Aeneas in this thrilling and unique production.
Mon. 16 July 7.30pm Tues. 17 July 7.30pm Wed. 18 July 6.30pm & 8.30pm
Fri. 20 July 6.30pm & 8.30pm
at The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford SE8 4AG £20 | £18 concs | £8 under 12s

GREENWICH PARK BANDSTAND

The Friends of Greenwich Park bring you Free Bandstand Concerts at the Bandstand, Greenwich Park. All concerts start at 3.00pm
Sun. 1st July Silver Ghosts
Sun. 8th. July The Crystal Palace Band
Sun. 15th July Gordon Mark Webber's Meantime
Sun. 22nd July Lewisham Concert Band
Sun. 29th July Belvedere Concert band
Sun. 5th Aug. Bromley Concert band
Sun. 12th Aug. South London Jazz Orchestra & Live Band Lindy
Sun. 18th Aug. Galaxy Big Band
Sun. 26th Aug. Greenwich Concert Band
Mon. 27th Aug. Mardi Gras Jazz band

ROYAL GREENWICH GUITAR FESTIVAL

Kings Charles Court
Wed 11th July Guitar Plus One
Thurs 12th. July 7.30 Graham Anthony Devine
Our Lady of the Sea
Fri. 13th July 6.00pm Luthiers Showcase
Fri 13th July 7.30pm Ali Arango

THE FAN MUSEUM

12 Crooms Hill SE10 8ER
A BIRD IN THE HAND Tues- Sat 11.00 - 5.00pm
Sundays: 12.00 - 5.00pm Until September 23rd.
Until Fans which incorporate the plumage of birds have a history stretching back thousands of years. The Museum's earliest fan, at least 1000 years old, is tipped with macaw feathers.
Feather fans were especially fashionable in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries and feature prominently within the display. The centrepiece of the display is an exquisite early twentieth century jay feather fan on tortoiseshell sticks, generously lent by The Fan Museum's esteemed patron, Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall. **Entrance: £5.00 Children**

GREENWICH MOZART FESTIVAL

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Performances with the Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra of London on 7th, 20th, 28th July and 11th August.
Tickets £15, £23 & £30 (concs available) from box office www.london-orchestra.com

MYCENAE HOUSE THIS SUMMER

MYCENAE HOUSE, Mycenae Road SE3
Sun 1st July 12-5.30pm - ParksFest Summer Sunday Extravaganza. Garden party event with live music, dance, workshops, stalls, food, drink + more! FREE
Wed 11th July 5.30-7.30pm - Piano Stars. Students from Royal Hill Music Academy Perform. Free entry.
Fri 13th July 8pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.
Fri 27th July 7pm - Summer Ceilidh. A fun evening of live music and dance presented by GFMA. £5.
Fri 10th Aug 8pm - JazzNights. Candlit Live Jazz music event hosted by Dave Silk. £10.
Sat 11th Aug 1-5pm - Total SILC Workshop. Learn a ground-breaking new dance syllabus dedicated to a vast & eclectic range of slow-tempo, contemporary music. £30
Thurs 30th Aug - Tropical Day. A day full of tropical fun, great music & funky armchair exercise suitable for all and for those with disabilities and mobility problems. Free entry.
For further information visit www.mycenaehouse.co.uk

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What's Off . . .



Natwest Bank has written to its customers saying they "have made a range of improvements to the ways you can bank with us", thus making it "more convenient to do your banking where and when you want."

Like our branch in Old Dover Road. Er, no, sorry, not really: it closed down on 19th June.

The good news is that you can still catch a bus to Greenwich, where your friendly neighbourhood bank awaits your custom.



Not very pleased: one of the bank's new neighbours in St Alfege's Church, opposite.



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FEATURES

**GREENWICH+
DOCKLANDS
INTERNATIONAL
FESTIVAL**

**The *WN* looks
at some of the
highlights in
July**

***This is not for you* 30th June & 1st July
3.00 & 7.30pm in Artillery Square,
Royal Arsenal FREE**

Audio described BSL Interpreted

Graeae Theatre Company's epic outdoor production pays moving tribute to Britain's wounded war veterans and their fight for respect and remembrance. Told with heft, beauty and wry humour, both on the ground and off it, the production has audio description and sign language as integral parts of the production.

This Is Not For You is part of 14-18 NOW, the UK's official arts programme for the First World War centenary, and Graeae, with the National Centre for Circus Arts, has trained 25 disabled veterans in aerial performance especially for the piece, which is directed by Jenny Sealey.



***'You go past the Cenotaph and the crowd
clap you. It's quite moving. We were waving
to the crowd, and this little boy said:
"This is not for you survivors. This is for
the dead." It made me feel guilty.'***

**– A veteran describing his experiences
on Remembrance Sunday.**



July 3rd - 7th at 9.45pm Thamesmead

This iconic, optimistic love story about teenage boys Jamie and Ste is given a homecoming in this outdoor production of Jonathan Harvey's well-loved play.

The finale of GDIF 2018, Beautiful Thing will take place on and around the original south Thamesmead locations where the play (and 1996 Channel Four film) were set, marking the 50th anniversary of the first families moving in to this utopian riverside community.

This new dance-theatre production, capturing the urban realism and fairytale fantasy of Harvey's script, is co-directed by Bradley Hemmings and Robby Graham (Angels in America) and will feature stunning digital projections by NOVAK (Dr Blighty), new music by Roma Yagnik and a community chorus.

**Premium seats £10 Free standing tickets
also available – booked online.**

**In the first of an
occasional series,
the *WN* profiles a
local artist.
This month PENNY
MATHESON looks at
the work of**

**Lubna
Speitan**

**Last month, the *WN*
printed a news item
highlighting the work of
artists in the Greenwich Open
Studios Goup and their event
in June.**



**Lubna at work in her studio
in Westcombe Park**

Lubna Speitan is one of the most recent artists to join the group. Lubna, who lives in Coleraine Road, trained and worked as a graphic designer until major surgery on her spine brought about a change of creative direction. Sadly, the *WN* hardly does justice to colour: so here we highlight her haunting monochrome nightscapes. For this reviewer it's the nightscapes that are the most memorable.

**Right:
St Paul's Cathedral**



**Left:
Tall Ships**

These ghostly ships remind one of *The Flying Dutchman* – or Coleridge's *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Once she had picked up a paint brush there was no stopping her. Following the pain and insomnia post-surgery, she found solace exploring the peace of London after dark and focused on street life at night. Hence her striking – and sought-after – monochrome nightscapes.

Her work however is not confined to

**Lubna Speitan Tel: 07788 237 893
Web: www.lubnaspeitan.com**

black and white. Like Colin Boothman and Felicity Moss, her long-established fellow Greenwich Open Studio artists in the Westcombe Park area, her paintings cover a wide variety of themes and, like them, colour can be all-important.

Planning on going to university?

Whether you are young, or a “mature student”, now's the time! The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website is now live, and should be your first stop when deciding which universities and courses to apply for September 2019.

Students hoping to go to university next year can start to look at exactly what's on offer, what the entry criteria are, and lots more besides.

It can be daunting, whether students are applying straight from school or college, or if they've been in work for a while, or even on a gap year, so here are a few tips on what to think about:

* **Research your subject.** Who provides the course that will best suit you? For example, there is a difference between Drama and Theatre Arts, so you need to do your homework.

League Tables give some idea about the quality and nature of courses, but you should also look at prospectuses to get an overview of what topics are covered.

* **Research your university.** Just because a university offers your degree subject and ranks well doesn't mean it's a 'shoo in'. Go to university open days to gain a sense of the student experience. You will spend three or four years there, and may have to move from home, so you want to make sure you will be happy. Checkout what the student union is like. Other questions to ask:

- Do they have clubs and societies you are interested in?
- How easy is it to get to class?
- Are you on a campus or in a city?
- * **If possible talk to former students**, many of whom attend open days. Find out:
 - do you get to do work experience?
 - Are there sandwich course options with a year in industry?
- * **Look at employability rates** for the university as a whole and your field of study.
- * **Get to know the the UCAS application process.** It can seem a bit daunting but don't be put off.
 - * **Know the dates:** you can start actually applying for your course in May, but all applications for autumn 2019 need to be received by January 2019 and that includes your personal statement.
 - * **Think outside the box.** Even if you aren't currently studying a “relevant” subject, don't discount applying to a course that really interests you. Most institutions consider all applications where students have demonstrated a passion for the subject.
 - * **Make sure you attend any open days, workshops and / or school visits.** These will help you learn more about the course that you're interested in,
- Studying a degree is a significant commitment and it's a big decision, so make sure you get all of the information you can.**

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ENVIRONMENT



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

The Storyboards on the heath

JOHN BARTRAM

Seven storyboards depicting the major events and wildlife on Blackheath have been unveiled in a £30,000 project led by the Blackheath Society.

Placed at strategic points around the Heath, the storyboards give details of the local events which occurred, important historical characters and, where relevant, ecological issues and its flora and fauna.

They provide orientation maps, directing readers to the key sites of local interest. Most of the images come from the Blackheath Society's photographic archive.

The first board is located on Royal Parade near a section of the Heath known as Washerwoman's Bottom. Despite cold, blustery weather at the launch, over 70 people heard local councillors Kevin Bonavia (Lewisham) and Geoffrey Brighty (Greenwich), the project designers – architect Madeleine Adams, local historian Neil Rhind, and history professor Anne Curry: all praised the three-year project as a great contribution to the area.

Prof. Curry is an expert on the battle of Agincourt and the board at the top of Blackheath Hill in the north west of the Heath is placed at the spot where London's mayor and aldermen met the victorious



Henry V on his return to England in October 1415.

The boards were sponsored by the Blackheath Society, the Borough of Lewisham from the ONBlackheath Community Fund, the Royal Borough of Greenwich Blackheath and Westcombe Ward and the Agincourt 600 Charity Fund.

The panels are positioned at busy public hubs, such as bus stops or path intersections, and avoid cluttering important views and spaces. They are formed of enameled white steel, screen-printed with full colour images, maps and supporting text.

The Society's brochure The Storyboards on the Heath, with full details and a map, is available from its office on 020 8297 1937 or email office@blackheath.org

New clean air initiative is launched

Over 30 partner organisations in the fields of academia, business and government, from across Europe, met in Royal Greenwich as part of the European Union funded 'Sharing Cities' programme.

Residents in East Greenwich and Greenwich Peninsula will benefit from the five year programme which uses technology and advances in data analytics to address challenges faced by major cities. Sharing Cities works with the borough's Low Emission Neighbourhood (LEN) programme which tackle local air quality.

The theme of the consortium meeting was 'Delivery and Innovation through Collaboration'. Partners shared their experiences of implementing innovative trials in the fields of building retrofit, smart energy management systems, electric mobility, smart lampposts, data platforms and citizen engagement.

The Royal Borough also took the opportunity to launch a brand new project called Zero Emission Deliveries (ZED), which aims to reduce congestion and poor

air quality in Greenwich caused by delivery vehicles – the first council-supported cargo bike zero emission delivery scheme in London.

The ZED project will offer businesses and local residents a professional delivery service which can transport everything from letters and parcels through to goods weighing up to 200kg, while contributing zero emissions into the local environment.

The company chosen to operate the service 'Recharge Cargo' has a proven track record operating an entirely cycle based fleet of vehicles in Brighton, and pays its staff the London Living Wage.

The borough is also launching a new low emission initiative for residents, a new electric bike loan scheme. Residents can borrow an e-bike for a month to trial the technology and see how it can help them cycle more and further around London.

All participating residents will be fully supported throughout the month and the travel data collected will be evaluated by Imperial College London.

The smart city: Greenwich

The Royal Borough of Greenwich's ground-breaking work on smart city innovation has been highlighted in a high profile national study.

Commissioned by the global technology giant Huawei, the UK Smart Cities Index, 2017 compared 20 UK cities on how they are using smart city technology to tackle urban challenges. It judged London and Bristol to be the UK's two leading smart cities, highlighting the considerable progress in several London boroughs, "notably in the ambitious Digital Greenwich programme".

The report highlighted that Royal Greenwich is home to several advanced transport innovation projects – many of London's ground-breaking transport investments are coming together as players in the myriad of projects supported by Digital Greenwich. These have established the Royal Borough as a hub for transport innovation. The report also highlights its work in developing and testing a sustainable energy management system.

The report judged that one of the most ambitious smart city programmes has been launched by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, led by the Digital Greenwich team.

The study highlighted that Greenwich is the London demonstration area for Sharing Cities - a €25million EU Horizon 2020 project led by London, Milan, and Lisbon. The 3-year project, launched in January 2016, is developing, deploying, and integrating replicable solutions across the energy, transport, and information technology (ICT) sectors.

The London projects include energy efficiency, renewable energy, urban mobility, and smart parking projects. One of the most ambitious projects is the development of a sustainable energy management system (SEMS) that is consolidates and analyses energy data from smart meters and other intelligent devices. The SEMS also links to the broader urban data platform being developed as part of the Sharing Cities programme.

Planning system: "not fit for purpose"

England's planning system is at a "historically low ebb" and is "less effective than at any time in the post war era, with an underfunded and deeply demoralised public planning service".

The reason: government deregulation. The warning comes from our former MP, and former housing minister Nick Raynsford. He is urging significant changes to the system, arguing that it is "no longer capable" of shaping the places people need for long-term well-being.

In May, Raynsford presented to the House of Lords nine provisional recommendations as part of the interim findings from the Raynsford Review of Planning that he has been engaged in.

His report claims that the current system has been built "on the back of assertion rather than evidence" and argues that continued deregulation is leading to very poor quality outcomes for people.

Moreover, persistent changes to planning legislation have left the system powerless to defend the public interest and that there has been "significant loss of public trust". Housing issues are a particular cause for concern – Nick Raynsford was once the director of the Shelter Housing Aid Centre.



Nick Raynsford

Among the report's recommendations is the establishment of a statutory definition of planning which would regulate development in order to achieve 'social, economic and cultural wellbeing'.

Raynsford's report also recommends avoiding short-term decisions by setting a legal obligation for government to plan for the needs of future generations. He said:

"We need a new approach with people at the heart of decisions and system which meet the growing challenges of housing affordability climate change and economic transformation."

The review, of which the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) provides the secretariat, is being led by a cross-section of built environment al professionals and has engaged with over 1,000 people over the past 12 months.

New houses? Let them eat cake!

The architects Nissen Richards have drawn up proposals for a new exhibition space that will also provide live music and conferences at Meridian Quays, near the 02.

Only temporary, though: the plan is to use the site only for 8 - 10 years until developer Knight Dragon decide to build housing; if they so decide.

The new building will be, basically, a two-storey rectangular structure with black cladding – in mourning, perhaps, for the

houses that won't be built there for ten years, if ever.

There will be space for 1400 seats and around 3000 standees. The new building will provide jobs, and other developments in the area include a new shopping centre inside the 02 to be opened later this year, with four million visitors expected annually. Doubts have been expressed about the transport system's ability to cope.

The planning reference is 18/1285/F

Council urged 'do the right thing'

Local residents have long been critical of the decision to build London City Cruise Port at Enderby Wharf without providing a shore-based energy supply.

The campaigners – No Toxic Cruise Port – argued that visiting liners' diesel engines would be the equivalent of some 700 idling lorries, and ships should be required to use cleaner on-shore power from the National Grid.

London mayor Sadiq Khan has also been critical of the plan - but he insists that the decision lies with Greenwich Council and the Port of London Authority. He had no powers, he said, to interfere with local council decisions.

Nevertheless, he has met the new leader of the Council, Cllr Danny Thorpe, to talk about the future of the planned cruise liner terminal at Enderby Wharf, and to urge

him to "do the right thing" about cutting pollution.

Cllr Thorpe backed the scheme when it came before the planning committee in 2015, and last year continued to defend it at a public meeting in Mycenae House, organised by the local branch of the United Nations Association, despite protests from residents in Greenwich and the Isle of Dogs about the impact of the scheme.

Questioned by the London Assembly member Caroline Pidgeon about the scheme, the mayor pointed out that the responsibility for the scheme lies firmly with the council – but he said he will be talking to Thorpe about the project to see what can be done.

Cllr Thorpe had used previous mayor Boris Johnson's backing for the scheme as justification for it going ahead as planned.

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