Free to 3800 homes, in libraries and some shops

September 2020 No. 6



Pandemonium did not reign; it poured.

John Kendrick Bangs

# CONCURRENT TRAFFIC TRIALS AFFECTING THE WESTCOMBE PARK AREA

The Westcombe Society has recently L been informed about the two traffic trials below which will affect our area. They are to be run almost concurrently.

### **Greenwich Park**

One of the desired outcomes of the Royal Parks Movement Strategy was to reduce the amount of vehicular through traffic within our parks. In Greenwich Park this was to be achieved by the removal of the commuter route through the Park. You will have seen our response to the Strategy in the May issue of the Westcombe News where we pointed out that we had concerns about the impact this would have on Westcombe Park when drivers sought alternative routes, especially when other traffic-related initiatives were in train locally.

Whilst we have appreciated a traffic-free Park during the current pandemic we had asked the Royal Parks to ensure that the trial did not start until traffic volumes were back to normal (they have been much reduced). This was to ensure that an accurate assessment of the impact be available for the ensuing consultation.

However, we now know that the trial in Greenwich Park started on 15th August and will run until February 2021. The consultation will take place in

November/December which we feel will be too soon to accurately reflect the impact of increased traffic on Westcombe Park.

## West Greenwich

Added to this, the Royal Borough have decided to run a trial of measures to reduce

traffic in West Greenwich. This, known as 'Hills and Vales' will involve the installation of modal filters which will give access to some forms of transport and not others (eg no cars but cycles allowed,) achieved with bollards and plant containers in many cases and width restrictions.

This has been implemented under an Experimental Traffic Order and began on 20th August. A public consultation will happen following the trial period where actual experiences can be shared. Feedback can be provided on the proposals from the 3rd September by completing an online

The Westcombe Society expressed their concerns to Highways about the West Greenwich trial which is likely to increase traffic on Maze Hill, Vanbrugh Hill and Westcombe Hill when first mooted last year but we were not invited to respond to the initial consultation. As with the closure of the Avenue in Greenwich Park we feel that the timing of the trial will not reflect the increased traffic as businesses re-open.

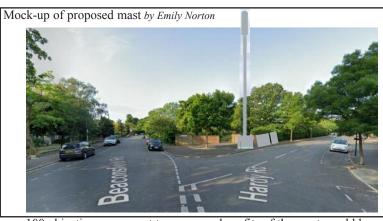
For further details see:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/westgreenwich

**FEEDBACK:** If you experience serious traffic issues as a result of the above trials please complete the online surveys. Your comments should also be copied to 'info@westcombesociety.org' and our local councillors in order that we can understand the level of disruption to Westcombe Park.

# **RESIDENTS PROTEST** AT POTENTIAL EYESORE

Ann Hill



ver 100 objections were sent to Greenwich Council's Planning Department regarding the proposal to erect a 5G telecommunications mast at the intersection of Beaconsfield Road and Hardy Road, just by the entrance to Ingleside Gardens.

Looking at the image of the 18m mast and cabinets, it is not surprising that neighbours are extremely upset at the prospect of such a dramatic change in outlook from their windows, and the wider community have also expressed their concern and resentment at the adverse visual impact the mast would have on the Westcombe Park Conservation Area.

Four days before the closing date for objections, neighbours staged an impromptu sit-in at the proposed site to prevent contractors excavating a 1x1m hole to see



if there were any utilities underground.

The application is from Hutchison 3G UK Ltd (H3G) which is a British telecommunications and internet provider based in Maidenhead. It provides 3G and 4G services through its own infrastructure and is now rolling out 5G services. In 2016, the EU blocked its attempt to purchase for £10.25 billion the UK operations of O2 as the takeover would reduce competition within the UK market. H3G states the

continued New and Extended Cycleways... Cycleway 4 in the borough, including improvements to the Angerstein roundabout -

Newsbriefs

benefits of the mast would be a much faster service for residents and the ability to handle more data.

The Council has a specific section in its Local Plan that relates to telecommunications development (Policy DH(c)). This states that planning applications will only be considered where:

i. regard has been given to locating a site which causes minimal visual impact subject to operational needs;

ii. any proposal is sited, designed, coloured and landscaped so as to minimise visual impact on its setting and local environ-

iii. the special character and appearance of the Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site, Royal Greenwich's Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and Historic Landscapes are preserved or enhanced;

iv. the possibility of sharing facilities, such as site, masts, and erecting antennae on existing buildings or other structures has been fully explored and demonstrated;

v. technologies to camouflage telecommunications apparatus have been fully explored.

vi. any proposal meets International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for public exposure.

The Westcombe Society Environment Committee was among the objectors and contended that the application contravenes the Council's telecommunications policy as its visual impact will be great and will adversely affect the setting and local environment; it will not preserve or enhance the Conservation Area; the possibility of sharing facilities has not been fully demonstrated; it is not camouflaged.

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/1677/tfl and greenwich announce fast -tracked\_plans\_for\_major\_new\_cycleway\_in\_southeast\_london.

# NEW AND EXTENDED CYCLEWAYS

## **WN Reporter**

The Council has secured funding for a ■ number of Cycle Route initiatives. Those of most interest to our readers/residents are described below.

Greenwich Park to Shooters Hill This cycleway is to encourage pupils to cycle to the various secondary schools along this route and to help create a better environment along Old Dover Road. The proposed route from Greenwich Park to Shooters Hill would start at Vanbrugh Gate and travel along Maze Hill, Vanbrugh Terrace, St John's Park, rejoining the east end of Old Dover Road and onwards to Shooters Hill Road, ending at the junction with Baker Road.

As the eastern end of Old Dover Road is quite narrow, the council proposals include a bus gate at the bridge across the trunk road to allow only buses and cyclists to travel east towards Shooters Hill Road. They do not anticipate any access issues for residents, businesses or street services

along this section.

A diagram of the route is available on the RBG website (although the design is not yet complete).

www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/Streetspace. Cycleway 4

The Westcombe Society are pleased to hear that TfL have accelerated the plans for the Cycleway 4 route from Greenwich to Woolwich including the changes to the Angerstein roundabout to ensure the safety of cyclists. They state that enabling work is imminent and the main work will start on the mile-long extension in early

There will be a new fully-segregated cycleway through the simplified junction, with new signals to help people walking and cycling navigate the junction safely and easily.

RBG have published a news story on their website about TfL's plans to extend

continued.....

**Local Licensing Laws** The Royal Borough of Greenwich is updating its policy setting out how it regulates businesses that sell or supply alcohol, provide entertainment or late-night refreshments in the borough. Residents and local businesses can have their say by 25 September 2020 at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/licensingpolicy

## Wild about wildlife

The Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group held an online meeting via Zoom on August 26th. Those taking part included representatives from Greenwich Council. Issues on conservation and wildlife were discussed. A report on outcomes will appear in October's issue of

# Vanbrugh Pits

Joe Beale reports that the Friends of Vanbrugh Pits volunteer conservation days will be back this autumn. The hope is to start at the Pits in early September, with a later event at Hyde Vale, followed by others later in the year. Social distancing will be the order of the day – and please bring your own gloves. Dates and times to be con-

## **Get Well Soon**

The WN sends best wishes to Myles Dove, former distribution manager of the WN, for an early recovery from his recent fall. Best wishes too to Gordon Baker, former chair of the Westcombe Society, for a speedy recovery; he is currently at Tudor Grange Nursing Home.

## **Black Lives Matter**

By happy coincidence, Hester Grant, wife of former resident Thomas Grant, has published her book The Good Sharps, about well-known 18th century family that includes Granville Sharp, who played a key role in the abolition of the slave trade. Unbelievably, the slave trade still exists . . .

## **Private Lives Matter**

In a significant cyber security incident, Blackbaud, database manager of Age Exchange, along with sundry other charities and universities, has been the victim of hacking. Blackbaud has assured anyone concerned that steps have been taken to ensure that all the data hacked has been destroyed. One victim, at the end of July, was the

Labour Party, although no political motivation is thought to have been involved. Another victim: the National Trust. These incidents underline the importance of ensuring that we all keep sensitive data

# Get a Free Sports Kit

Families across Royal Greenwich have been benefitting from free sports packs to help them get active again after lockdown.

Each pack consists of assorted sports equipment, racquets, balls, bean bags and skipping ropes.

BETTER is hoping to make further sports packs available in the future. To register your interest in a sports pack, subject to availability, email Better at: rbgsportdevelopment@gll.org.

## THE COMMITTEE of THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY invite you to join us for Coffee or Lunch to help raise money for MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT.

As part of The Biggest Coffee Morning In the World, once again we shall be holding our annual Coffee

**Morning at Mycenae** House Community Centre, Mycenae Road, on Friday, 25th September 2020 at 10.00 am - 2.00 pm. Coffee, tea, delicious homemade cakes and sandwiches will be on sale and there will be a Cake Stall and Raffle too.

(Raffle to be drawn at 1.30pm) For enquiries, or to offer help please ring Caroline Owens on 0208 8530948. This will be a socially distanced event.

# COMMUNITY

# Westcombe News

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To access back numbers (in colour) go to: nttp://www.westcombesociety.org/west combenews

# FROM THIS DAY FORWARD



rganising a wedding amidst a global pandemic was full of unexpected twists and turns. What was and was not permitted seemed to change daily. Our original date had to be cancelled due to the government lockdown. When the government allowed weddings our original venue could not help us so we lost our deposit and were without a venue. The search for a new wedding venue then began! We secured the Queen's House only eight days before our wedding day.

The ceremony took place outdoors, under the colonnades. The maximum

A SAD FAREWELL TO...

Je are sorry to record the death in

July of Gordon Borsberry, a member

of the Westcombe Society who lived in

Glenluce Road. He was a modest man

who seldom talked about his service in

Gordon travelled the length of Italy

Signals, as a messenger in the war and it

was at that time that he developed his love

of Italy and all things Italian. He had vivid

Palace in Southern Italy and of riding his

motor bike around the deserted palazzo in

Sienna. He couldn't wait to return when

the war was over, much to the horror of

while serving with his unit, the Royal

memories of being billeted in Caserta

Word War II.

number of friends who could attend was 30, and that included our vendors (photographer, videographer, etc)

Government guidelines prevented us from holding a 'large reception' following the ceremony, so we made our way to Greenwich Park for a celebratory picnic.

Friends and family who had just attended our wedding brought their own hamper and found a socially distanced space near us.

Dan was born in Dulwich and grew up just off the New Cross Road. Haley Crabb is from Oregon, on the west coast of USA.

## **NEVILLE'S RISING STAR**

Tn August, Neville Grant received his Lifetime Achievement Award in Woolwich Town Hall from the Mayor, Cllr Linda Bird. He was accompanied by his wife Jane, and older son Thomas. "I felt very honoured," said Neville.



## his parents! Our deepest condolences to Malcolm and Kay. Neville Grant

**CHANGE OF DATE** The Westcombe Society's Chrysanthemum Tea for the elderly will now be on 10th October. Invitations will be sent out at the end of September.

> Views expressed are not necessarily those of either the Westcombe Society, or the Westcombe News.



Dear Sir or Madam, Today having checked that The Royal Grill is still on the Government's 'Eat out to Help out Website

I set out for my lunch at my favourite local restaurant, ordered my lunch and arranged to pay at the till. But when I enquired about the 50% discount I was told they were not in the scheme. I was told they did apply but wished to withdraw, but hadn't been unable to unsubscribe.

Are they allowed to join The Scheme and decide to unilaterally withdraw?

In the great scheme of things it was a minor irritation on a very hot day. I left and went elsewhere for lunch. If I had stayed and paid the

full price for my lunch would I have been victim of FRAUD by the business and or the Government?

What about other customers who have paid full price but later find the café was in the scheme?

Many customers may have been happy to go there, happy that the restaurant was not in the scheme and pay the full price knowing the café would be more comfortable and less busy.

Yours Sincerely, Dr David F Senior Parkside, SE3

From Gabi Marston, Coleraine Rd, I have lived in Coleraine Road for just over 60 years and would like to convey my gratitude to local people for their consideration and offers of help during the latter

years of this period particularly at The Standard where I now do almost all shopping.

As I shuffle along with a 'walker' people offer help with opening spring-loaded doors. look out for traffic, ask if I'm ok or need help loading the walker into the back of my car.

So "thank you" to all these anonymous people who renew my faith in human nature.

From G Bailey. Westcombe Park

I was horrified at the proposal by Hutchinson to erect an eighteenmetre communications mast at the junction of Beaconsfield and Hardy Roads, on the site of a small park.

The mast would dwarf the houses nearby and would be completely out of keeping in what is supposed to be a conservation

I very much hope that this proposal will not be accepted. In any case, it is supposed to serve new 5G technology. Heaven only knows if and when such technology will be commonly used - or even if it is absolutely necessary, given the horrendous costs involved.

From Alice, Ruthin Road In the next edition of the Westcombe News, please thank the convenience store by the Station. They have kept the shop open despite one of them being vulnerable.

## HAPPY FIRST CENTURY SID!



ur sincere congratulations go out to One of our regular readers, Sid Peters of Tudor Grange, who was 100 years young this summer. He is pictured here reading his card from the Queen. He also made his first Zoom chat with relatives and of course had a special cake.

## **CHARITY OF THE YEAR NAMED**

The charity Advocacy Now was proposed as The Westcombe Society's Charity of the Year 2020/21 at the AGM on 24th August. It was agreed by those attending.

Advocacy Now has been active in Greenwich since 1996 working with adults over 18 who feel they need support and advice on matters affecting their lives.

Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice

Advocacy is an indépendant charity offering advocacy support to people living in the RBG and surrounding area. The service is free and completely confidential.

Advocacy would match fund the money donated by The Westcombe Society and use it as a contribution towards the salary cost of a new part-time post to run drop-in sessions at Mycenae House and two Health Centres in SE3.

This resource would provide a valuable service for local people seeking help, as well as using the sessions to train new volunteers.

## GOOD COMPANY

Do you like living in a safe neighbourhood that looks after its streets, trees, our vulnerable citizens? Like the idea of having local community events to make friends for the whole family, network? Would like to add your voice to an already established and effective environmental group that lobbies local politicians, local businesses, the council?

But don't have the time, or contacts? Why not let us to the hard work... it is why the Westcombe Society was formed. For just £12 per family, £8 for an individual and £4 for a senior citizen you can buy some peace of mind that you are contributing a little something to a bigger picture of healthy community living.

Now you can give 'contribute to my **community'** on your 'to-do' list - a big

WESTCOMBE SOCIETY	
MEMBERSHIP	

WESTCOMBE SO	CIETY
MEMBERSHI	P
Please send this membersh	nip form to:
Christine Legg, 69 Mycen	ae Road,
London, SE3 7SE	
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Address	•••••
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Family Membership	£12 [ ]
Individual Membership	£8 [ ]
Senior Citizens/Unwaged	£4 [ ]

# LOCAL NEWS

# MAKING STREETS SAFER FOR CHILDREN

**Neville Grant** 

reenwich Council has initiated a School Street Scheme in parts of the borough to encourage safe, active and sustainable travel to school. Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders allow streets to be closed to motor vehicles at drop-off and pick-up times.

The scheme means that School Streets become pedestrian and cycle-only zones during term time from 8.00am to 9:30am and from 3.00pm to 4.00pm. During these times a road will be closed to motor vehicles by collapsible bollards operated by the

School staff are available to allow access for emergency vehicles and blue badge holders. Local residents are encouraged to avoid coming and going during the closures; they can contact the school in emergencies.

Following local consultations, the scheme is being launched in Invicta and Siebert Roads. However, it is not clear how widely local residents were consulted.

The Montessori Education Trust operates a school on the corner of Siebert Road and Westcombe Hill. Wendy Fidler, Director of the Trust and Head of the School, seems not to have been consulted. She told the WN: "This scheme creates problems for us, because access to our school is by means of the gates in Siebert

Staff arrive from about 8:30am. They are not able to leave vulnerable children in order to move cars around parking bays.

Many families have vulnerable children with serious mobility issues. The provision of the disabled parking bay is vital, and being able to park in Siebert Road, is of inestimable value. It enables children to access the school without needing to navigate the traffic on Westcombe Hill.

"Our school groups take place at various times during the day, whilst after school groups commence at 3.30pm – all times which coincide with road closures," she said.

Dr Fidler is of course sympathetic to the need to keep school children safe, but these proposals are seriously detrimental to her children. She suggests that the barriers should be installed just down the hill from Invicta Road, where the area outside Crown Roofing would provide an ample turning circle.

The School Streets team responded that they realised The Montessori Education for Autism (MEfA) was a charity - but had not realised that it was an educational unit when they looked at the area. Their understanding was that MEfA is located on Westcombe Hill and not within the School Street closure itself; and pointed out that families attending the Montessori are able to park in parking bays in the surrounding roads, including Westcombe Hill.

Later, the School Streets team confirmed that MEfA was not consulted before the scheme was implemented, but that officers have since communicated with them.

They point out that if the closure barriers were moved further into Siebert Road it would encourage drivers to enter this section to drop off children, and high risk situations would be created by cars turning round - precisely what the School Streets scheme is designed to avoid.

The team would encourage Montessori staff to avoid the operational times of the scheme when arriving and departing. However, should emergencies can arise, Montessori can be given a key for the lockable bollards to enable this access. Dr Fidler thought that this might be a workable solution.

However, this may not be the end of the story. The School programme has been implemented as a trial, allowing the council to collect feedback and review how it is working. They will then decide whether to keep the scheme or modify it. To find out more readers should visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/schoolstreets

# **NO TOXIC TUNNEL**



Extinction Rebellion activists have boarded a drilling rig in the middle of the Thames Lat North Greenwich, which had begun preparatory work for the Silvertown Tunnel. They have hung a banner saying No Toxic Tunnel.

# **GREENWICH NEIGHBOURHOOD GROWTH FUND**

wards for the third round of the A Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund have just been announced. This money derives from the Community Infrastructure Levy which is paid on all developments above a certain size. This year £630,639 was made available. Of this just over £400,000 has been awarded to projects in the Greenwich area.

The list of successful Greenwich projects is below and we await further details:

- Blackheath Halls £40,000.
- Mycenae House Vanbrugh Community Association. £232,750. This is a project to improve access to the space.
- New Capital Quay Community Club
- The Bridge Playground Development East Greenwich £38,116. Meets at East Greenwich Pleasaunce
- Christchurch School Community Garden £11,388. Intended to improve facilities for food growing, gardening and wildlife
- Community in Rothbury Hall Emergency Exit Arts £31,155.(Part Funded)
- Accessibility for All Forum@greenwich
- Wild Play at Greenwich Peninsula Ecology Park and Southern Park The Land Trust £25,134.

Projects that were shortlisted in Round 3, but have not been prioritised for funding will automatically be put forward for consideration in Round 4. Funds from areas where there has been an underspend will be re-allocated to Area 4 (Woolwich).

# TEA HUT UPDATE

 $\Gamma$ ollowing the terrible accident to the Blackheath Tea Hut in January, the owner, Adam Furze addressed the annual public meeting of the Blackheath Joint Working Party (BJWP) in February to outline the various possibilities for the future. These included a new design, close to the original site but also the possibility of moving the business across the road to the small boarded-up building next to the pond near the park gate (see picture below).

This was discussed by the BJWP at a virtual meeting in June, when the members, including the Councillors from both Greenwich and Lewisham gave unanimous support to the latter proposal.

Adam Furze, is keen to re-start the business as soon as possible as the staff have been unable to work for the past six

Discussions are continuing with officers and Councillors from both Greenwich and Lewisham about the long-term plans for the Tea Hut but, in the meantime, Lewisham has agreed a temporary licence for a trailer van close to the site of the old Tea Hut. A suitable vehicle is currently being refurbished and should be able to start supplying refreshments soon.

Adam and his team have now had access to the building on the Greenwich side and discussions are underway as to whether or not this might prove to be a viable option.

We are pleased to report that the staff member who was injured is making good progress at home.

The driver responsible for the accident is now being prosecuted for dangerous driving and will appear at Bexley Magistrates Court in October. Blackheath Society

# THE CAMERAS ARE COMING

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is **▲** introducing a network of CCTV enforcement cameras to enforce a range of moving traffic contraventions. The move will discourage illegal driving behaviour and help to reduce congestion, increase road safety and improve air quality.

Warning notices will be issued for a period of two weeks from Monday 24th August. If you get a warning notice you will not have to pay a fine. After two weeks, enforcement will begin and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) will be issued.

As part of this introduction, if you receive a PCN you'll now be able to view CCTV video footage or still images of the offence online. A list of signs and restrictions which CCTV can enforce is available

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/cctvenforcement. These include:

- Driving in bus lanes
- Stopping in yellow box junctions
- Ignoring banned turns and no-entry signs - Driving the wrong way in one-way
- streets.

The council will also be able to enforce parking contraventions, such as parking on 'keep clear' markings outside schools and illegal parking at bus stops.

Moving traffic offences, previously enforced by the police and transferring this responsibility to the council will enable the police to focus more resources on combating and reducing crime in the borough.

## **MEET OUR NEW MAYOR**

he Mayor of the ■ Royal Borough of Greenwich for 2020 to 2021 is Councillor Linda Bird.

Linda was born and raised in Kingston Upon Hull before moving to the borough in 1980, where she raised her children and ran a successful dance company called Greenwich Youth Dance.

In her lifetime,

lessons in schools all over London. Linda stood for council in 2014 and was involved with Health and Adult Social care scrutiny.

Linda has also been a headteacher, and has taught PE and dance

elected by the people of Eltham North Ward. She is also a member of the Planning Board, the Fostering Panel, and Pic: Neville Grant

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# **FEATURES**

# LITTER, LITTER EVERYWHERE

**Anne Williams** 

A s lockdown eased people gathered outside on the green spaces for picnics and left something ugly behind. Litter, misshapen, brightly coloured, torn, shiny, dull, all being moved around the grass on the breeze. Why? Too lazy to walk to the bins which, 'are overflowing anyway mum'. 'Why don't they take it home with them?' say the local observers and critics, 'it's their rubbish!'

In response, the badly littered Greenwich Park had banners printed and fixed beside the social distancing ones. 'This is a Park, not a toilet or a rubbish bin. Please respect this space, plan ahead and take your litter home with you'. I don't know about you but I could feel the Park's pain. Its cry reminded me of the Elephant Man when he screamed in frustration, "I am human being!" But still the litter got left behind.

In the end it is was the park's staff along with volunteer groups who cleared the rubbish from the defaced green spaces restoring their natural harmonious state again.

The council put notices on the bins urging the public to take their rubbish home with them. Believing it's the public's litter and therefore not the council's responsibility. Which is ironic really as many local shop keepers and home owners believe it's the council responsibility to clear up, in return for the high rates and council taxes they are charged.

Raj from the corner shop in Westcombe Hill says he has always dealt with the litter problem outside or near his shop by picking it up himself and binning it. "If the drain is blocked I unblock it. This is a nice neighbourhood, with lots of trees, why aren't people more proud about where they live, why don't they want to keep it litter free?" The words 'involvement' and 'responsibility' came to mind as I listen to his frustration with a long-standing prob-

lem. "The council need to empty the street bins more often". he said. When I suggested asking for a bigger bin near his shop he shook his head. "No it will just get filled with dumpster's rubbish.'

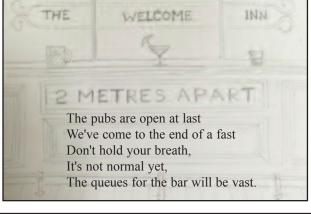
So why do some of us think our litter is someone's else's problem? Why do others, driving by in cars, throw their rubbish out of the window like the world outside is one big litter bin? Is it a psychological issue, a repressed anger perhaps of a psyche 'disappointed with its life', being acted out by dumping their crap on others to spoil another's day? My dog is delighted when we come across bumper bags of mostly eaten McDonalds or a collection of KFC gnawed chicken bones. But I can't feel her

Before Covid-19 happened the council had started the process of changing their rubbish collection schedules. They were going to pick up less often and planned to remove the dog waste bins in the local council parks. Plans that are obviously going in the wrong direction as there is no evidence that waste is reducing, on the contrary it's increasing both in supermarkets and the packaging that comes with online shopping. Plus take-aways are becoming the most popular way to eat.

Covid -19 has highlighted the public's attitude to their own litter - they don't care for it! If we are to learn the lessons of pandemic living, then this surely is one the council could take note of.

I'm left with the thoughts of involvement and responsibility... should we be going to source and rethinking packaging completely? Only bio-degradable packaging with a zero tolerance policy? At least then we know Nature will help us out in the fullness of time. In the meantime perhaps we can all become Environmental Champions and big-heartedly give the council and the parks a helping hand.

**WAXING LYRICAL AS** THE BEER **FLOWS AGAIN** Sinead Paull



# **GREENING THE GREY & CLEANING UP CRIME**

**Debra Blundell** 

 $\Gamma$  or too long, the streetscape around Delacourt Road at the far end of Old Dover Rd has been in decline. Its businesses and residents regularly encounter litter. pollution and anti-social behaviour. Now, local business Ginkgo Financial is doing something about it, with an initiative that it hopes will improve the environment, deter crime and build links with the community.

"In the two years we've been here. we've had two attempted break-ins, drunks using our car park as a toilet, an abandoned van, regular fly-tipping and daily rubbish to deal with," says Daren Wallbank, owner of the financial planning business and a Westcombe Park resident.

"Not to mention noise and pollution from the A102. Enough was enough. My wife is passionate about gardening and the environment. It was her idea to tackle both problems by making Delacourt Road a nicer place to work and live in."

## Greening the Grey

The couple named the initiative Grow with Ginkgo. It kicked off with a (socially-distanced) gardening day, when the team planted a border of grasses and wildflowers around the firm's offices on the corner of Old Dover Road and Delacourt Road, along with native scented climbers along the fence that separates the road from the polluted A102.

"Plants make people happier and healthier," says Daren. "We've chosen drought-tolerant species that will encourage wildlife, fight pollution and help with surface water drainage. Even our new bin store is green. The fact that it looks beautiful is a bonus."

## **Environment Champions**

Littering and fly-tipping is also a huge problem in the area – especially discarded nitrous oxide cannisters. We have joined Royal Greenwich's Environment Champion scheme. Staff, equipped with litter pickers and hi-vis jackets, will be carrying out a daily clean-up.

## **Broken Window Theory**

Thanks to its secluded site, Delacourt Rd has also become a magnet for anti-social behaviour, including property and vehicle thefts, daytime drinking and even drug

'We subscribe to the broken window theory of crime," said Daren. "If a broken window isn't immediately replaced, people feel an area isn't cared for and therefore they can do what they like there. So we're

trying to fix some of those windows."

Over time, cleaning and beautifying the area will, he hopes, help. Ginkgo will continue to work with its neighbours, community policing and neighbourhood watch to deter crime. "I've been able to share CTV footage with the police several times," he said. "Recently, I recorded a car theft in action with a clear registration plate. The police were able to recover a fellow trader's stolen car the same day." What's next?

The hope is that Grow with Ginkgo becomes a wider community initiative. We would love to work with other traders and residents to improve the whole of Delacourt Road. Eventually, also we'd like to adopt other unloved corners around Blackheath Standard and work with local schools and community projects.

"Ultimately, we want to be good neighbours," Daren sums up. "Blackheath Royal Standard is a fabulous place and we just want to give something back."

To find out more about Grow with Ginkgo or get involved, visit ginkgofinancial.com/grow

Visitors to the office at 2 Delacourt Road can pick up a planting list and a free packet of seeds to grow at home.



Daren dressed as an RBG Environment Champion. He's holding part of a bike frame was dumped.

If any reader would like to become an **Environtment Champion then contact RGB** Council for your free hi-vis jacket and litter stick and join in the litter parties!

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# WHAT TO DO

## GO FOR AN URBAN BIKE RIDE AND BEYOND

Jo Burand

With restrictions easing and TfL splashing out on a host of cycle highways I've been oiling up the chain and discovering just how far you can get from Greenwich on two wheels.

Cycling east besides the Thames, Canary Wharf is soon a distant set of shapes above a foggy horizon, the Thames widens to allow migrating birds and seals sanctuary below curved spaceship-looking factories. Concrete enclaves and cannons guard criti-

cal points and railings almost disappear allowing the water to lap at your feet, across from where huge guillotine-like flood gates hold back tributaries. Kent can't quite decide whether its urban or rural, historic or modern? Going beyond Erith to Dartford will take you down footpaths lined with blackberries but will soon force you on to busy A roads. For guidance, follow NCN1 signs from Greenwich foot tunnel.

# **'I COULD DO THAT!'**

The Conservatoire in Blackheath is re-**■** opening in September for individual tuition and group classes in music, art and drama (and also keeping some online offerings, after last term went so well).

So if the desire to develop your artistic skills is something Covid has taught you, then why not try out a course here? They have some fabulous short art courses - so you can just put your toe in the water for a taster. For adults this term Botanical Illustration is back (great for immortalising anything you had time to grow in lockdown); Pen & Ink Illustration will do exactly what it says on the box (the box being one that you could illustrate with pen and ink in this class!); a new course in Papermaking could be your introduction to a new love of creating things yourself

(bread is so two months ago); followed by Mixed Media in which we'll be exploring the techniques of Matisse, Hoch, Blake and Bearden and their 'mixed' use of 'media'.

Online, Simon is teaching How To Use Colour Online and Painting Techniques & Materials Online after they were particularly enjoyed by students last term; and Victoria will be running Drawing Projects Online, a mixed level course suitable for beginners and those with more experience wanting to further develop their drawing skills.

T: 020 8852 0234 E: info@conservatoire.org.uk @TheConservatoire @ConservatoireSE www.conservatoire.org.uk @blackheath-

While there are likely to be a few well-

signposted diversions where we weave our

way through shiny new apartment blocks

and past lovely old signs telling us we are

115 miles from Dover and 110 miles from

Canary Wharf in all its splendour from all

Oxford, we mostly hug the river, seeing

The walk is suitable for adults and

children, almost all on the flat, and it can

leisurely, stopping for coffee and to take in

the views, maybe having a pub lunch will

add up to a lovely morning. We won't be

far from public transport anywhere on the

walk so if you don't want to go as far as

The Globe, catch a bus back ....or retrace

There is a £10 subscription per person

Macmillan. Please do feel free to also do

your own fund raising. A bottle of water

for this walk, 100% of which goes to

your steps back to Greenwich.

take as long as you want it to. Strolling

For the little ones, there will be online offerings of Tiny Tots (6-18 months), Toddler For the little ones, there will be online onemies of mily and their live counter-Tunes (18-36 months) and Little Maestros (3-4 years) alongside their live close by or just parts, in case you're not ready to join us in the building yet, don't live close by or just want to be able to do the lessons on your own schedule!

Junior Choir (6-8 years) and Training Choir (9-13 years) are also going digital, as are all of our Theory Plus! classes, so you can brush up your lines and dots from home.

## RIVER CHARITY WALK FOR MACMILLAN

**Diane Blackwell** 

ut on those walking shoes and join us for The Westcombe Society's annual walk raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

All being well Covidwise, we'll be gathering at the main bottom entrance to Greenwich Park by King William Walk at 9am on 20th September for what promises to be another really



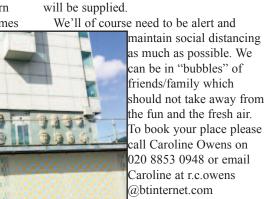
\_enjoyable way to help this most worthy of

The route is along the south side of the Thames. We walk past Cutty Sark, turn left and wind around the glorious Thames

parks and docks, sculptures, statues, the Brunel Museum at Rotherhithe and historic old pubs like the flower-

festooned the Dog and

Bell and the olde-worlde Mayflower. Just in time for morning coffee we arrive at the delightful Surrey Docks Farm, where a recently-opened café (no public toilets alas) looks out over the Thames. A cuppa and a peek at the farm's menagerie of animals are a welcome tonic before we head on towards Tower Bridge, and ultimately the world-reknowned Globe Theatre. In all it's about 6.5-7 miles give or take a diversion or two.





## SING FOR FUN

Woolwich Singers is a successful community choir that usually meets in Woolwich. It was set up eight years ago by Wendy Young, a teacher who lives in Eltham. The choir is still run by Wendy, a group of trustees and led by professional musicians

The idea behind the choir was 'Sing for Fun' and requires no audition to join. Wendy describes the ethos behind her

choir, as: "To enable people from a cross-section of the local community and from all walks of life, whose paths may not otherwise cross, to sing their hearts out together."

Wendy's professional background was in marketing and tourism before going onto teach English as a second language to adults, an ESOL teacher. She said: "My marketing experience helped me mentally not to give up at the first hurdle. And teaching ESOL played a role too as,

with a little persuasion, five or six of my students came to the first choir rehearsal with one becoming a trustee!"

When asked what drove her to want to set up a community choir, she replied: "I had been watching the TV series The Choir with Gareth Malone and feeling the joy of how singing was bringing people together. The pivotal moment came when I saw Gareth Malone himself take to the streets and start handing out leaflets as he tried to start his own community choir from scratch - that's when I knew I could do

Professional opera singer, clarinettist and pianist, Benjie del Rosario currently leads the choir and is their resident pianist. Wendy said: "It is very important that Woolwich Singers are led by professional musicians, particularly musicians that are community-minded as they know how to bring out the voices and at the same time how to enthuse, cajole and bring fun to the singers. Woolwich Singers has great aspirations and with professional

## Polly Morgan

musicians, these can be fulfilled!" "We sing widely, out and about in various venues in Woolwich and the Royal Borough of Greenwich - anywhere there's a space, we've almost certainly been!

"We've been lucky enough to perform in a mass choir on the pitch at the London Stadium (Olympic Stadium) for the Rugby League World Cup. In 2018 the choir sang in Covent Garden at the Brandenburg

> Choral Festival and also took part in the Greenwich + Docklands International Festival."

All members of the choir believe that singing promotes their mental health and wellbeing, Wendy adds: "Singing lifts you up and makes you happy!"

Woolwich Singers currently meet online using the video conferencing facility, Zoom, Wendy Young every Wednesday evening at 6.30pm, and Wendy encour-

ages all readers of Westcombe News to come and join them online and, when they can meet again in person, in Woolwich Town Hall. Wendy said: "Our rehearsals combine the love and joy of singing with finding time to have a good laugh together. We are a friendly choir so why don't you come and give Woolwich Singers a try?'

With the latest government guidelines announced that choirs can now meet in person, Woolwich Singers hope to be able to meet again in Woolwich Town Hall from September.

Interested in joining Woolwich Singers or want to try a session? Email Wendy: contact@woolwichsingers.co.uk W/site: http://www.woolwichsingers.co.uk/ Facebook:https://www.facebook.com/wool-



# ZOOM DATE

## STOP THE SILVERTOWN TUNNEL COALITION

n Thursday 17th September, at 7.00pm, they will have a zoom call to coordinate action against the tunnel by all organisations, and to consider further actions by the Stop the Silvertown Tunnel coalition. They welcome reports of your actions, and proposals for stepping up the

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campaign. They will put some suggestions about setting up working groups (e.g. for coordination, direct action, community outreach, political lobbying) and will welcome volunteers for these. A zoom link for this event will be circulated a few days in advance.



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# **FEATURES**

# A VICTORIA SANDWICH ANYONE?

As part of The Biggest Coffee Morning
In the World in aid of Macmillan
Cancer Support, The Westcombe
Society will be holding their annual Coffee
Morning at Mycenae House Community
Centre.



Last years cakes selection pic Neville Grant

have already formed a baking partnership and in the summer had a stall on the corner of Foyle Road and Westcombe Park Road where they sold their home-made biscuits and bread. They made £63.53 and donated the money to Great Ormond Street Hospital. "I go there for check-ups", Vasi

In the future Amayah and Vasi hope to get more serious with their venture and turn it into a business. Vasi is saving up for a camera and Amayah a laptop.

Below pic: Amayah (left) and Vasi getting busy (and messy) in the kitchen

Vasi Nesterenko and Amayah Gordon-Shirley both 10 years old and classmates at Invicta School, will be making a classic Victoria Sponge cake for the event. "Because the last one we made didn't turn out so well and I know we can do better", Amayah says. "Yes, and we will fill it with buttercream and use some of my grandmother's homemade jam!" Vasi adds.

These two enterprising students



For enquiries, or to offer help with the Macmillan Coffee morning please ring Caroline Owens on 0208 8530948.

# LOOKING FOR WORK?

If you're a Royal Greenwich resident looking for work, retraining or an apprenticeship, then Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB) might be able to help you.

GLLaB works in partnership with a range of local organisations and employers and is well suited to matching local people with job opportunities. Depending on your need, GLLaB can help with writing an effective CV, retraining or up-skilling and finding apprenticeships.

Cllr Denise Scott-McDonald, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy and Skills said: "GLLaB was established in Royal Greenwich and is a well-known and respected service among employers in the borough. GLLaB really understand the local job market, putting them in an excellent position to support local jobseekers."

If you're a resident looking for your next job, your first job or looking to learn new skills, I'd encourage you to get in touch with GLLaB"

GLLaB also works with people with disabilities who are looking for accessible

work. They provide free careers advice and employment support and can help long-time unemployed people find a job that's right for them.

It seems this organisation is truly dedicated to finding jobs for local people and has a wealth of experience to draw upon since their creation in 1996. GLLaB was set up on the site of the Millennium Dome as it was being built to maximise opportunities for local employment, mainly in construction, before expanding into many other employment sectors.

Once job-seekers are signed up with GLLaB - and a good way to do this is to fill in the online form - a weekly jobs bulletin is sent out to galvanise and inspire jobseekers to continue their quest for work. However troubled the job markets appear to be, GLLaB will help and support you all the way.

Phone: 020 8921 2440

Email: gllab-info@royalgreenwich.gov.uk Website:

https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/xfp/for m/484





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# ZOOMING IN ... OR OUT?

Paul Clayton

Zoom is everywhere at the moment, it's 'the thing' that many people are using to go to church, attend a meeting or even get together with friends while in quarantine. Whatever your thoughts, being able to chat with people via video can be useful and alleviate loneliness too. It is good to stay calm with something new. Getting stressed will make learning harder. Don't panic!

### Let's start with essentials:

Have you got a suitable device, is the soft-ware installed? It does mean a trip to your App or Play store if you've got a smart phone or tablet device. Good news is that its a few button presses away. Laptop users need to download the app via the Zoom website (https://zoom.us). If you don't have any device to get online, then ask for the phone number and code to join in at the appropriate time.

After it's installed: take some time to start investigating a few things, pressing on the screen (while the app is working) of your portable device will bring up audio/video options. Computers have an options button like a cog. Audio on/off looks like an old microphone, the video button looks like an old-style projector some meetings will put you in a 'waiting room' before the meeting starts, this is an opportunity to check your audio.

There are YouTube videos on these topics, make sure that you're searching for

your specific device.

Joining in: Zoom's popular usage can be found in the ease of joining a meeting; the host of the chat sends you an email with the details of when the meeting is, including a clickable 'link' (generally blue in colour) to start up the app. If there is a mention of a password, make a note.

Otherwise, there is a meeting number you can use

Finishing a meeting: the host can finish the chat for you, so don't worry about this either.

#### Top tips:

- \* Don't put yourself in front of a bright window (making a shadow), it looks like you're on the run from the police! Use a light from the side.
- \* If your internet speed is letting you down and making communication hard, sometimes it can help by turning your video off.
- \* Sometimes conversations overlap as we don't see the cues to talk, so pace yourself you can raise a real or virtual hand. There is also the option to send messages!

If you want to know more, or have any tech questions in these 21st century times, get in touch with Deborah Fitzpatrick at Mycenae House for a chance to chat with Paul at a Wednesday afternoon Techy Time meet up. deborah@mycenaereachout.co.uk 020 8858 1749 | 90 Mycenae Road, Blackheath, London, SE3 7SE

## BEAUTY IN THE EYE OF A GASHOLDER

Industrial heritage is an unglamorous but significant part of local history and part of it is about to disappear. The last remaining gasholder on Greenwich Peninsula is being demolished.

In the 1880s the site had two very large and innovative gasholders. Together they made up the largest concentration of gas storage known at the time.

East Greenwich 1, built in 1886, held nearly 9 million cubic feet of gas. The second was even larger before an explosion in 1917. It was damaged again by the Provisional IRA in 1979, after which it was demolished in 1986. But the tank remains and is on the site of the proposed Silvertown Tunnel .

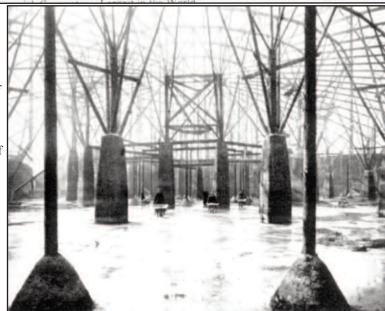
A planning application for the tunnel includes reference to the proposed archaeological investigation but is mainly concerned with Roman and pre-Roman evidence and largely ignores the more recent industrial heritage. Mary Mills, a local industrial heritage campaigner and an expert on the history of the area, argues that the gasholder is "part of our heritage – and surely we should celebrate the engineering expertise of our ancestors and take the opportunity to find out more about it and not just dig it up".



Blackwall Lan, date unknown, probably c.1910. Part of a set of postcards. Below pic: Interior shot of No.2. holder being cleared after the explosion. This is part of a set of pictures now in the possession of National

Grid Archive

Above pic:



# 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

# KEEP OUR TREES SAFE

**Maggie Gravelle** 

utumn is a peak time for tree work Aand tree surgeons, genuine and otherwise, will be advertising their services. A professional will be aware of the regula-

tions which protect trees in Conservation Areas, which includes most of the Westcombe Park area.

Under the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act, Section 211, all proposed tree work in a Conservation Area, with very few exceptions, must be notified to the local authority before work

begins. This includes pruning, lopping and topping as well as more drastic action such as uprooting or felling.

The Tree Officer then hassix6 weeks in which to act. She can; put a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on the tree, in

which case work may be prevented or there may be conditions applied; or not put a TPO on but allow the work to go ahead; or allow the six week period to elapse after

> which the work can go ahead. In addition she can impose a Tree Replacement Order, whether or not there is a TPO. This requires the applicant to replace the tree with a suitable species.

The local authority carries a list of trees with TPOs.

Failure to comply with these regulations is an offence liable to a fine of up to £20,000 or, in the most serious cases, trial in a Crown Court with a possible unlimited fine. So if you are hav-

ing work done make sure your tree surgeon is fully informed.

Further details can be found at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/treepreservation-orders-and-trees-in-conservation-areas#amenity-means

# The London Marathon **But Not As We Know It**

Unsurprisingly, Covid -19 has had an impact on the London Marathon. This had already been postponed from April to October 2020 and a press release on 6th August confirmed the arrangements for the 40th Race scheduled for 4th October this year. But it will not take place in the usual way.

Races for elite runners and wheelchair athletes will take place on an enclosed, looped course in St James's Park in a secure 'biosphere'. There will be no spectators but will be media coverage throughout the day and times will be eligible for Olympic qualification.

Everyone with a place in the 2020 marathon will still be able to take part by running, or walking, the marathon distance on a course of their choice. This has to be completed within 24 hours from 00:00 to 23:59 on Sunday 4th October. They will receive the finisher medal and T-shirt on completion. In addition all runners and charities with a place in the 2020 race will be eligible for a future Marathon. In 2021

the mass race is scheduled for Sunday 3rd October on the usual route. This gives the longest possible time for its successful

"The London Marathon is far more than just a marathon," said Hugh Brasher, Event Director of the Virgin Money London Marathon. "It brings society together in a moment of celebration of all that is good about humanity. We believe that Sunday 4th October will be a London Marathon like no other, and the 40th Race will take the spirit of the world's greatest marathon to every corner of the globe, with runners raising vital funds for the charities that have been so severely affected by the economic effects of the pandemic."

So it will still be possible to enjoy the event, either as a participator or a spectator - just not in the usual way.

More details can be found on the website; https://www.virginmoneylondonmarathon.com/news-media/latestnews/item/2020

## WOULD A VOLUNTEER WORK DAY SUIT YOU?

 $\Gamma$ riends of Vanbrugh Pits conservation volunteer workday, Saturday 5th September, 10am-1pm. Joe Beale (joetheillustrator@gmail.com) co-ordinates the conservation volunteer workdays. He hopes that working parties can resume on 5th September. If you can make it, join Joe

at 10am, Vanbrugh Pits SE3 - by the two benches beside the footpath that runs directly south from Vanbrugh Park Road to Charlton Way. Please bring your own gardening gloves.

We will be social distancing.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS (See also http://www.westcombesociety.org/)

WOODLAND HEIGHTS, VANBRUGH HILL ref 20/0710/F

To add a sixth storey to provide 8 flats with roof terraces

LAND TO REAR OF 34 FOYLE ROAD ref 20/2021/MA

To remove Condition 19 attached to planning permission so as to allow removal of Armco barriers along both sides of the access lane

13 STATION CRESCENT ref 20/2396/A

Dental surgery: To install 1 illuminated sign projecting outwards and 2 non-illuminated

JOHN ROAN SCHOOL, MAZE HILL ref 20/1942/L

To install fences and gates to front of school

45 FOYLE ROAD ref 20/1983/F

Change of use from dwelling house to multi-occupancy house.

JOHN ROAN LOWER SCHOOL, WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 20/2375/TC Fell 3 ash trees, 1 oak and 1 sycamore. Cut back 4 ash from building. Reduce crown of oak by 30%

## 101 MYCENAE ROAD ref 20/2433/TC

On rear boundary, reduce height of row of Leylandii by 3m and fell one dead one, Lop decayed lime to top of boundary fence.

# BRADBURY/DUNSTABLE/WYCOMBE COURTS, ST JOHNS PARK ref

Fell leylandii. Lift crown of 5 lime trees, oak, holly, Norway spruce, sugar maple, lime, horse chestnut. Crown reduce lime. Prune back tree of heaven.



## THE VANISHING HOUSE SPARROW **Shirley Broughton**

am lucky enough to live in a part of ■ Westcombe Park with a healthy population of house sparrows. I say lucky, because in London, sparrow numbers fell by 60% between

1994 and 2004 and the house sparrow is now on the Birds of Conservation Concern 4 (BoCC 4) red list (most threatened) and a priority BAP (Biodiversity

Action Plan) species.

## What has caused this catastrophic decline in numbers? Issues include the following

1. Inadequate food supply during summer and winter. Chicks are fed on a variety of invertebrates, including aphids, caterpillars, beetles and grasshoppers. Seeds and vegetable matter are also given, particularly during periods when invertebrates are scarce (e.g. cold weather) and become more important after the chicks leave the

A lack of small insects as a source of nutrients, due to loss of vegetation, has contributed to the steep decline in the number of house sparrows. Houses with wellvegetated gardens support some of the highest densities of house sparrows.

A lack of good quality food over the winter can also be detrimental, causing adults to enter the breeding season in poor condition and struggle to raise their young. 2. Loss of nesting sites. Modern buildings do not provide the opportunity for nests. These are often placed in holes and crevices within buildings, although sparrows will readily use nest-boxes. Freestanding nests are also frequently built in creepers against walls, in thick hedges, and conifers - all of which are steadily declining in availability.

3. Loss of roosting and daytime habitatshouse sparrows will always seek out cover-

from hedges, dense shrubs, or areas of less managed vegetation for daytime living. In recent years, gardens have been paved and extended over and 'landscaped', with far fewer more natural/vegetated/less manicured areas.

4. The gradual increase in air pollution and use of herbicides, insecticides and pesticides has polluted and damaged the environment and its flora and fauna.

## How can we help?

1. Grow insect-friendly plants for the House Sparrows (and other birds and bats) to feed on - many websites are available to offer advice, eg Buglife, Plantlife, The Wildlife Trusts.

Grow seed-producing plants, eg. teasels, globe thistle, sunflowers and leave seed heads on the plants until early spring. 2. Feed the birds. Buy easy-clean (prefer-

- ably caged) feeders and fill with seed (sunflower hearts is a favourite food). Fat balls/blocks are also popular. Feed throughout the year!
- 3. Provide live mealworms in the breeding season - available more cheaply in bulk online.
- 4. Protect/preserve existing nest sites; put up nest boxes on buildings and grow suitable creepers and dense shrubs to provide new sites for nesting.
- 5. Grow thick, preferably evergreen hedges and have a wilder area for daytime habitat/nests.
- 6. Ditch the chemicals!

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