

# Westcombe NEWS

Free to 3800 homes, in libraries and shops

February 2021 No. 1



*“My sister says Valentine’s Day is cancelled this year, I don’t believe her.” Lottie Plum, 11 years*

## Local Women in New Year’s Honours List

A well-kept secret was revealed on New Year’s Eve when **Jill Demilew** was awarded an MBE for services to midwifery in the Honours list. A much deserved award to an amazing midwife.

Jill was a Consultant midwife at King’s College Hospital till she retired in 2019. She also received the Chief Midwifery Gold Award in 2020.

I am sure many Greenwich residents were guided into this world by Jill’s expert hands and welcomed by her joyful spirit when she was an independent midwife many years ago. Congratulations Jill, a much loved neighbour and friend.

Ann Cochran

And.....

**Gwen Zammit** has been awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the community of Charlton, Royal Borough of Greenwich. “A very good start to 2021” Gwen said.

## THIS COULD AFFECT YOU!

The Council are working to develop a scheme that tackles all of the local concerns and issues we have concerning the traffic in Westcombe Park. They will be writing to all residents with proposals and FAQs in the coming weeks to seek your views and ensure the scheme meets as many of our residents’ requirements as possible.

Maggie Gravelle

## Fight goes on for The Vanbrugh

The Planning Inspectorate has recently approved plans to build a house on the outdoor space behind The Vanbrugh pub in East Greenwich, nearly a year after the proposals were rejected by Greenwich Council.

This was the third such planning application from the pub’s freeholder – Isle of Man-based Hamna Wakaf Ltd. – which would see the loss of 29% of the pub’s outdoor space, including part of its beer garden.

Greenwich Council had previously refused the plans on the grounds that the development “would fail to provide a high quality living environment” because the proposed amenity space is split between two different locations, with much of it located beneath the upper floors of the proposed house. However, the Planning Inspector overturned the decision, stating that “whilst the form of amenity space provision may not match the normal perception of a suburban garden, it would nevertheless to my mind be fit for the purpose intended in terms of quantity and quality.”

Plans to develop the site have attracted significant opposition from the local community, with fears that the pub’s viability would be affected by the loss of part of its beer garden. The latest application received 379 objections, including from Westcombe Society and East Greenwich Residents Association, which consider the pub to be an important and popular local amenity.

Tom Stanworth



Good to see Jools Holland still finds time, in his busy schedule, to read the Westcombe News! He promises the WN an interview in the coming months so if there is a question you’ve always wanted to ask him, now’s your chance. Email your question(s) to [wnews@westcombesociety.org](mailto:wnews@westcombesociety.org) and we will put them to one of our most well-known former residents who still keeps his studio here.

Post Brexit the business of touring musicians such as Jools has changed significantly, causing more expense all around. His manager, Paul Loasby, writes, “having to get work permits for each musician will be painful. It’s unnecessary red-tape leading to increased costs and large amounts of time spent on paperwork. Then there’s the problem on cabotage :

**‘The European Union allows limited cabotage for road transport. A non-resident carrier which has driven to another**

**EU country is allowed pick up and deliver a further load inside the host country before returning to the border.**

(Wikipedia)

“This will give touring artists a rather larger headache for trucking their equipment. Plus the additional paperwork for a carnet to be approved at each EU country’s entrance and exit, will no doubt cause delays that will affect the logistics of the touring agenda... it really is bad. We are still trying to determine how this is going to operate (if at all). We appear not to know at this stage.”

As for Jools’ manager’s views on whether music will return to normal after the pandemic, he had this to say, “Once there is confidence in the efficacy of the vaccine I believe that live music will return with the a vengeance.....the ‘Live Experience’ is unique and does not replace the digital one.”

## << Newsbriefs >>

### V for Life!

V for Life is the world’s only charity working on behalf of older vegans and vegetarians. It publishes a popular lifestyle magazine - from nutrition, through to seasonal recipes and information on meal-delivery services.

It runs its own veggie pen-and-phone-pals scheme; provides information on the veggie-friendly care homes that it works with; and offers grants to support independent living. And if you’ve ever wondered how your dietary beliefs would be protected should you lose capacity, V for Life has the answers. Website: [www.vegetarianfor-life.org.uk](http://www.vegetarianfor-life.org.uk)

### Noise Barrier

As part of the Silvertown Tunnel project it was agreed that a noise barrier would be delivered in the Siebert Road/Invicta

Road/Westcombe Hill area adjacent to the A102.

A community meeting has been arranged by TfL for the 3rd February for those directly affected i.e. those in the immediate vicinity and siding the A102, from Charton Road to the Westcombe Hill junction with Station Crescent. TfL will share progress to date, next steps and will ask residents for input and suggestions. It will also include an explanation of how the upcoming consultation will work including the consultation area.

### Lest We Forget

On 27th January, Royal Borough of Greenwich remembered victims of the Holocaust in an online event to mark Holocaust Memorial Day.

The event included several

music and song performances and recorded memories from some of the ‘hidden children’ caught up in the horrors of the WWII. The theme for this year is ‘Be the light in the darkness’ to encourage all to reflect on the depths humanity can sink to and also the ways individuals and communities can resist that darkness to ‘be the light.’

And finally.....

### Hope Springs Eternal



Wendy Young, Woolwich Singers community choir leader

## Donation Drive

To support your community

We are collecting for  
QEH, HER Centre,  
Clockhouse Food Bank,  
MumsAid and GRACE  
Aid, contactless drop

The Bridge Community  
Centre is situated in the  
top right hand corner of  
East Greenwich  
Pleaunce, entrance on  
Chevening Road SE10 0LB.  
Enter park on foot

**The Bridge East Greenwich is accepting donations Monday to Friday between 12 pm & 2pm throughout lockdown from Monday 25th January**

We are currently collecting the following items:

QEH—shower gels, soaps, shampoo, face cream, hand cream, moisturiser, deodorants, toothbrushes, toothpaste, prepacked snacks & treats, cordials, teabags, herbal teas and instant coffee

HER centre, MumsAid and Clockhouse foodbank— Store cupboard essentials, long life food, toiletries and sanitary products

Grace Aid—full sized toiletries, new socks and underwear for women, boxers for men and underwear for girls and boys (not babies)



Thanks to footballer and food poverty campaigner, Marcus Rashford, the plight of families on low incomes struggling during the pandemic has never been higher on the political agenda. While it is still being debated in Parliament how to help these families, we can all do our bit to reach out and support those less fortunate during the challenging times we all find ourselves in. Please donate to local food banks.

[contact@greenwichfoodbank.org](mailto:contact@greenwichfoodbank.org)

Polly Morgan



# COMMUNITY

## Westcombe News

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**MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:**  
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Deadline for February copy:  
16th March 2021

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Deadline for Advertising:  
14th March 2021

### DISTRIBUTION

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### PRINTING

Trojan Press  
Email: dave@trojanpress.co.uk  
www.trojanpress.com

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To access back numbers (in colour) go to:  
**http://www.westcombesociety.org/westcombenews**

## WESTCOMBE SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

Please send this membership form to:  
**Christine Legg, 69 Mycenae Road, London, SE3 7SE**

Name.....

Address.....

Tel.....

Email.....

Please enclose payment as appropriate:

Family Membership      £12 [ ]

Individual Membership      £8 [ ]

Senior Citizens/Unwaged      £4 [ ]

## Patrick Early RIP

We are sorry to report the death on 30th December of Patrick Early, a local resident and poet, at the age of 84. Many local residents will remember readings of his poems with the InWords group.

Patrick Early studied Modern Languages at Cambridge, and Applied Linguistics at Leeds and Essex Universities. He was also a graduate of Goldsmith's School of Creative Writing.

A career officer in the British Council, he lived with his family in a number of countries including Europe, Latin America and the Arab world.

In retirement, he devoted himself to poetry. His poems have appeared in a number of British and Irish publications. In 2013, he published a collection of his poems *Ice Flowers Over Rock* with Lapwing, Belfast.

Throughout his life, Patrick evinced an interest in Spanish language and literature, and he spent some years working for the British Council in Madrid and Barcelona. His translation of the poems of one of the greatest Spanish poets of the 20th Century, Antonio Machado in a collection, entitled *A Voice in Time* (Our Glass Publishing 2014) are outstanding. It takes a poet to translate poetry.

We send our condolences to his wife, Stephanie Allen-Early, and family.

*Neville Grant*

## 'MAMMA MIA!'

### Have some fun post lockdown by joining a local theatre group

The Theatre Group at Charlton are appealing to the local artistic community for help with their new production, *Mamma Mia*, to be staged in the autumn.

If you feel too shy for centre stage then there is plenty of opportunity to join in with backstage activities... staging, lighting, publicity, etc. Also singers and dancers, here is your chance to pump up your CV with a credit for performing in this entertaining show.

"Mamma Mia was chosen because it will give those attending the opportunity to let their hair down and have a good night out!" said Gwen Zammit, the Theatre's Director.

Please contact Gwen Zammit at gwen-zammit@yahoo.co.uk. for details.



## Letters

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

### Dear Editor,

This morning I have heard several disturbing stories of problems with the vaccinations in various parts of the country. As my experience in Greenwich was to the contrary I would appreciate if it too was recorded.

Early on Tuesday of one grim morning in early January, my husband and I had a telephone call from the NHS asking if we wanted to be vaccinated. After our enthusiastic confirmation we were directed to Charlton House for Friday afternoon - the place where the vaccinations in our area have been taking place.

After a long dark period of doom and gloom we saw this invitation as an opening of a window of light and on that Friday we were on time for our vaccination slots. These are being given in the wood-panelled Old Library, a big enough space with separate entrance and exit enabling an adherence to the

present covid-distancing rules.

When we arrived there was a short line of elderly people with required distances between them and several volunteers attentively watching if anyone needed help or a seat. All through the procedure we were full of admiration for the brilliant organisation and coordination of medical staff and many volunteers facilitating the whole operation.

After receiving the vaccine, administered by the deft hands of a young doctor, we were led by another volunteer to the sitting area allocated for the wait of 15 minutes, in case of a possible reaction. We were given the stopwatch but also some time to remember many enjoyable events in this beautiful space such as the music appreciation lectures by Mathew Taylor and other beautiful concerts.

The library does not have a heating system and in winter it is a cold environment, especially if

one has to spend many hours there; as all the NHS stuff and the volunteers have been doing for the sake of public good. In spite of it the whole procedure was smooth and admirably well organised.

I want to thank the NHS, Greenwich Council and all the volunteers.

Vesna Domany Hardy  
**From: Neville Grant SE3**

The proposal by Sadiq Khan to raise his share of the council tax by over 9% seems ill-judged, given that many Londoners are seriously up against it in these troubled times. As usual, it will hit the poorest the hardest.

Even more ill-judged is the proposal to use the extra income to pay for free travel for 60-year-old working Londoners, who already have free travel - except perhaps when going to work in the early morning, thereby exacerbating the generational conflicts already existing in society.

slow moving congested traffic which means a deterioration in air quality not just for residents but for those (including many school children) waiting at bus stops on Blackheath Hill.

Whilst I understand the desire of many local residents to live on quieter roads I think we all need to think of the wider consequences. Many readers will be aware of the recent Coroner's inquest into the death of Ella Addo-Kissi-Debrah which ruled that air pollution had made a material contribution to her death - the first time that such a verdict has been recorded. Ella's



Pic: Blackheath Society

family lived near the South Circular Road a similar High Traffic Road to Blackheath Hill and Shooters Hill. I would hope that that case and the current furore about the intro-

duction of LTNs across London may lead to a more considered debate on how to reduce traffic, and especially polluting traffic, on London's High Traffic Roads with the ambition of Clean Air for All.

Singapore, a similar size to London, has introduced road pricing which encourages everyone to use their vehicles less (and is the only way to tax foreign lorries and firms like Amazon). More locally perhaps we could advocate 'Green Walls' of plants and trees to filter air pollution along appropriate sections of Blackheath Hill (we were promised something similar by the Royal Borough 25 years ago when they introduced a lorry ban in Greenwich Town Centre but other priorities for the funding apparently emerged).

Those with long memories may remember 2002 when Blackheath Hill, for reasons still unexplained, collapsed and became London's largest pot hole for over a year. If Greenwich and Transport for London think the answer to the traffic problem locally is to close all the feeder roads and funnel all traffic along Blackheath Hill - beyond its natural capacity to cope - well don't say you weren't warned!

*Paul Wheeler, Blackheath Hill*



# LOCAL NEWS

## We will miss you Doreen



Doreen Grandon, a long-time resident of Westcombe Park passed away on 3rd January 2021, four days short of her 87th birthday after a long illness.

Doreen and her husband Aubrey lived in the Westcombe Park area for many years, moving from Coleraine Road to Beaconsfield Road in 1965. The house was very much a place for socialising with many members of the local community attending parties that were held on a fairly frequently basis. Aubrey died in 1989 but Doreen remained in Beaconsfield Road. Both Doreen and Aubrey were popular members of the Westcombe Society - in fact they were amongst the first to join the WS at its inception. They both joined in with all the social events, particularly the garden parties, entertainment and amateur dramatics. Doreen continued this 'tradition' after Aubrey's death culminating in a huge party at Mycenae House for her 80th birthday.

Doreen was keen on music, a passion she brought to her work. She taught at some challenging schools - The Holy Family on the Ferrier Estate and St Patrick's in Plumstead. Doreen delighted in bringing opera to her children, indeed the staff were always surprised when internationally-recognised singers arrived in Plumstead! She took her pupils to Covent Garden and the staff there reciprocated by sending their singers to the school to perform parts from the operas that were being studied. It was an extraordinary endeavour at the time but Doreen would continue to meet ex-pupils after she retired who would talk animatedly about the experiences she provided.

Doreen was a born organiser and every Christmas would arrange a holiday for the next summer for her friends - sometimes as many as 20 people.

She was a keen member of the Ascension Choir and Blackheath Choir and carried on singing with them until very recently - she could be heard practising in her garden until a few years ago.

Doreen leaves a son Adrian and four grandchildren. Her daughter Hilary sadly died three years ago. Doreen will be greatly missed by her friends and neighbours. Her funeral was held at Eltham Crematorium on 20th January.

There is a remembrance page set up on Dementia.uk - <https://doreen-grandon.muchloved.com> if anyone wishes to make a donation to her memory or share photos or stories of Doreen.

## Best Served Locally?

We are being urged to support our local food outlets and indeed many of these have been life-savers during lockdown. It is therefore alarming to read in the News Shopper (22.11.20), that some of these have very poor hygiene standards. Inspectors regularly visit local establishments and rate them using the Food Standards' Agency 0 - 5 scale. Several have recently been given a rating of 1, including David Lloyd's Leisure Centre which is used by many local residents.

## LONDON'S MOVING EASTWARDS

Jo Burnand

News that the Silvertown Tunnel has received further condemnation adds to concerns over pollution and the allocation of affordable housing in a London that is steadily moving eastwards.

The tunnel, which is due to begin construction this year and would run in similar alignment to the Emirates cable car has been dealt a further blow by MP for Erith and Thamesmead, Abena Oppong-Assare, who decried the tunnel's "continuously escalating costs". She joins a chorus of opposition to the plans: Matthew Pennycook whose Greenwich and Woolwich constituency would contain one end of the tunnel and MP for West Ham, Lyn Brown's constituency at the other end, have both criticised the plans on the grounds it would generate more congestion as City Hall seeks to recuperate some of the £2bn in maintenance costs the tunnel is expected to incur over the next 25 years.

The four-lane tunnel has seen its original construction estimate of £600m in 2012 rise in a 2015 consultation to £1bn. It has been touted as a means to freeing up congestion in the South East and in Greenwich in particular where tailbacks along the A2 and through the Blackwall Tunnel have seen residents paying for what are long-overdue improvements. Sadik Khan claims the tunnel is crucial to improving river crossings in East London that are "antiquated and worn out" while campaigners claim the scheme is incompatible with plans to make London carbon free by 2050.

London's infrastructure has been creaking at the seams under the weight of a population that has grown steadily with deregulation and an expanding EU. London's population surpassed its 1939 peak of 8.6m in early 2015 and, despite Brexit, is expected to open its doors to another two million before 2050. The expansion of



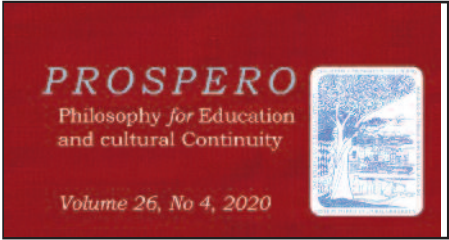
Crossrail across London has sought to cater for this growth while leaving at the door of south east London's municipal councils the task of providing houses and opportunities for an area of London expected to grow by 600,000 over the next 15 years.

A 'City in the East' rising from the Isle of Dogs and expanding into the Thames Gateway offers a vision. Spurred on by the success of Canary Wharf and the regeneration that has followed subsequently, brownfield sites will provide the foundations for housing developments interlinked by a network of 'opportunity areas', among them a £1bn business park for start-up businesses alongside the River Lee.

While these plans take shape over the next few years, London is being pushed outwards and beyond by an expanding band of gold that has sent the price of land rocketing, like the stew of utensil-like 'tall buildings' extending from the once solitary NatWest Tower. Clusters of red lights at night mark out a Greenwich grappling to retain some control over what, how and where housing is laid down, while private consortiums plough ahead, supplying ever costlier accommodation to an increasingly wealthy clientele: of all the housing on Greenwich Peninsula a quarter is signed off as affordable.

As Greenwich Council embarks on its biggest housebuilding scheme in a decade the Government has insisted the construction industry "should continue to operate during the national lockdown". Just as Canary Wharf rose from the rusting redundant frames of the West India Docks so too will London continue to grow, but at what price is perhaps a question we cannot afford to ask.

## Farewell to Prospero



We at WN are sad to report the demise of the magazine Prospero which for 26 years has been produced with great dedication by the editor, local resident Chris Ormell.

Prospero's subtitle was Philosophy for Education and Cultural Continuity, and it campaigned for educational reform. It was the house magazine for the PER Group - (Philosophy for Educational Renewal) first mooted in 1993 at the University of East Anglia, in Norwich, where Chis Ormell was a lecturer in mathematics. PER campaigns for a process of renewal in which schools, colleges and teachers can regain the sense of mission, verve and enthusiasm characteristic of the best schooling of the past.

It urged education to be placed in the hands of teachers, rather than managers, and education to be about learning to reason, and to develop a sense of value, rather than merely to cram for exams by being able to regurgitate facts. Education to be for life, rather than a narrow focus on jobs.

Chris Ormell managed to produce four issues of this magazine a year for 26 years - no mean feat. He also organised meetings and conferences both here in Westcombe Park, Cambridge, and central London.

Chris Ormell will continue with his campaign via a PER blog, and a pertinent newsletter wittily called Impertinence. But many of us will miss the intellectual stimulus that Prospero provided, and its infectious idealism.

Neville Grant

## HAVE YOUR SAY!

Royal Borough of Greenwich have released their draft carbon neutral plan to tackle the climate emergency and reach its ambitious target of net zero carbon emissions by 2030. It sets out what changes and actions they feel are necessary. We have until 7th March to give the Council our feedback, before the plan is formally adopted in spring 2021. Hard copies available on request. Email: [sustainability@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:sustainability@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

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# FEATURES

## A Sign of the Times

Amy Bird

We currently have a powerful configuration in the heavens that is having a huge impact on us all, albeit in different ways. Neptune, the planet of oneness, compassion, sacrifice, unity and the collective, is forming a challenging square to the Nodes of the Moon. The Nodes represent our destiny and show what we are currently focusing on for our soul growth, both personally and collectively. They are currently in Sagittarius and Gemini, two signs which are very much concerned with truth and lies, opinions versus facts, intuition versus the rational, logical mind. We are being asked to have a long hard look at our beliefs, seeing them for what they are and recognising how limiting some of them might be. The Gemini North Node encourages us to use our common sense and logic and invites us to make time to do some research so that we can back up any intuitive hunches we may have.

In the meantime, Neptune is such a powerful force right now, because it is in its own sign, Pisces and square the Nodes. On one level, it is creating great confusion as the truth is completely shrouded and obscured so that we don't know what to believe and what information to trust. All is not as it seems! The lower vibration of Neptune, which is certainly playing out on the world stage right now, brings fogginess, confusion, smoke screens, propaganda, gaslighting, illusions appearing real, delusions, deception, disillusionment, victim mentality, a desire to escape reality, drug and alcohol abuse, burying our heads in the sand, fantasy, theatre, trance, glamour, enchantment, spells and magic. Indeed, there is the potential for some kind of "spell" being cast that puts people into a trance, both personally and collectively. Neptune truly is the master of illusion, potions and the subliminal message!

The higher vibration of Neptune, however, encourages us to turn within for the answers we seek. In our seclusion we are invited to develop a more tangible connection to Spirit and the Divine so that we can cultivate a greater sense of faith, hope and trust and acceptance of what we cannot change. We are encouraged to

breathe, meditate, do yoga and Tai Chi, walk in nature, dance, sing, make art; anything that brings a sense of inner peace and stillness.

Neptune invites us to listen to the subtle cues and messages that our bodies give us and to pay attention to our dreams. We all intuitively know the truth; it's just a case of developing greater trust in this inner knowing. We are encouraged to pray for those we love, for the world we live in and for the world our children will inherit. Indeed, Neptune helps us to use our imaginations to set positive intentions and dream the new world into being.



Neptune shows us the true meaning of empathy, forgiveness and unity. It reminds us that we are not as different as we think we are and asks us to find compassion and understanding for all living beings, whether they agree with us or not! Neptune sometimes asks us to sacrifice something on a personal level for the sake of an ideal and the higher good of all.

For some this sacrifice may involve standing up and speaking out in the face of ridicule, ostracisation and even loss of financial security, while others may feel that staying at home and not seeing their friends or family is a sacrifice they are willing to make in order to protect the frail and vulnerable. Indeed, we may still be asked to make sacrifices in order to bring in the world we want to live in. Short term sacrifice for long term gain.

Martin Luther King had Neptune square his Nodes within his birth chart and is a classic example of someone who made huge personal sacrifices for the sake of a cause that was far greater than him. In his final speech, before he was assassinated, he literally said "I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land." There is a sense that he knew that his time was up, but it wasn't in vain. Possibly he felt that his life was a small price to pay for the future of humanity.

[www.amybirdartandastrology.com](http://www.amybirdartandastrology.com)

## PLANNING A LOCKDOWN

Jo Burnand

I remember a school report dimly describing me as one minute head down and the next peering vacantly out of the window. Tearing around a surgery, days later, my mother looking helplessly on, the doctor diagnosed hyperactivity and suggested she plan my days with the aim of getting me to focus. Trips fishing for sticklebacks, then blackberry picking, then assembling myriad sweet treats led me to becoming a chef and of course in a kitchen you don't stop. That is until Covid and furlough came along.

For those of us whose time stretches ahead to some unknown horizon, having a plan is an idea worth trying at least. You don't have to give every second a purpose, there are all sorts of ways to waste time, like clapping for Saga Noren in The Bridge or arguing with invitees' choices on Desert Island discs. But for an amount of time, you can choose something to devote yourself to - and for that you need a plan. Using your time for some aim, will attract you to the idea of using time, just as not using it, will leave you sitting looking out of the window. Another good thing about plans is you can choose how much or how little time you devote to something. If what you've chosen appears daunting, even boring, or you're not sure whether your expectations will marry with the reality, put aside only half-an-hour. If it's something you have always been dead set on, then now's the time to give your dreams some time - if only because then you can then tick it off your 'to do' list.

My plan has been to devote two hours of an evening to learn how to draw. With my range of pencils from H6 to HB6 I've sketched away at faces in magazines, hands, especially my own. Then, before settling down to wonder at why Happy Valley had never figured in my life before, I would share an hour's zoom session from around the world, wincing, to start with, my efforts to paint short poses of live models. I'm still trying to drag myself away from drawing outlines in pencil first and then filling in with colour, as children do in sketch books, and am sad to say I haven't got there yet.

Time, like pennies in a jar, adds up, but unlike small change, you cannot see time. Its difficult to gauge how well you're using it. What matters is that you are using it and for that it helps to have a plan.

## Keeping Fit in Lockdown

Annie Grey

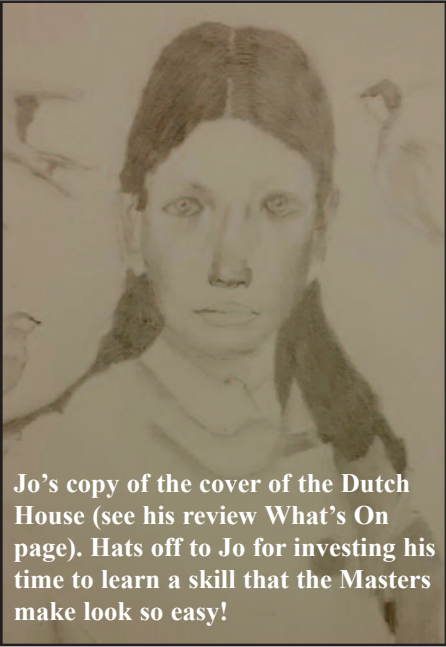
With the gyms closed again, more and more people are having to keep up their fitness regimes whilst at home. This, although a good idea in theory, can cause one or two problems in practice.

Space : Some of the instructors from the gym I usually go to are now running their classes via Zoom so it's good to see the people who usually attend the classes, albeit on the screen instead of in person. However, the room in which my computer is situated isn't particularly wide so doing the grapevine or sashay moves (fellow gym bunnies will know these) is fraught with problems - not least the bumping into the bookcase one side of the room and the wall the other. Jumping is causing my Victorian floorboards to creak alarmingly and, according to some of the girls who

they jump up onto the table where the laptop is situated and peer into the screen to see what all the movement is about.

Yes, there are hundreds of videos on YouTube but finding ones that suit my needs (bearing in mind the instructors are often very young and I'm ... erm ... not) can be tricky and become repetitive and boring after a while. Some of the instructors insist on saying things like, "I see you!" (no, you can't) or showing how much they're sweating and I should be too (no, I'm not).

So until that happy day when the gyms and pools open again, I shall continue to wiggle, jiggle, dance and prance from the comfort of my living room.



Jo's copy of the cover of the Dutch House (see his review What's On page). Hats off to Jo for investing his time to learn a skill that the Masters make look so easy!

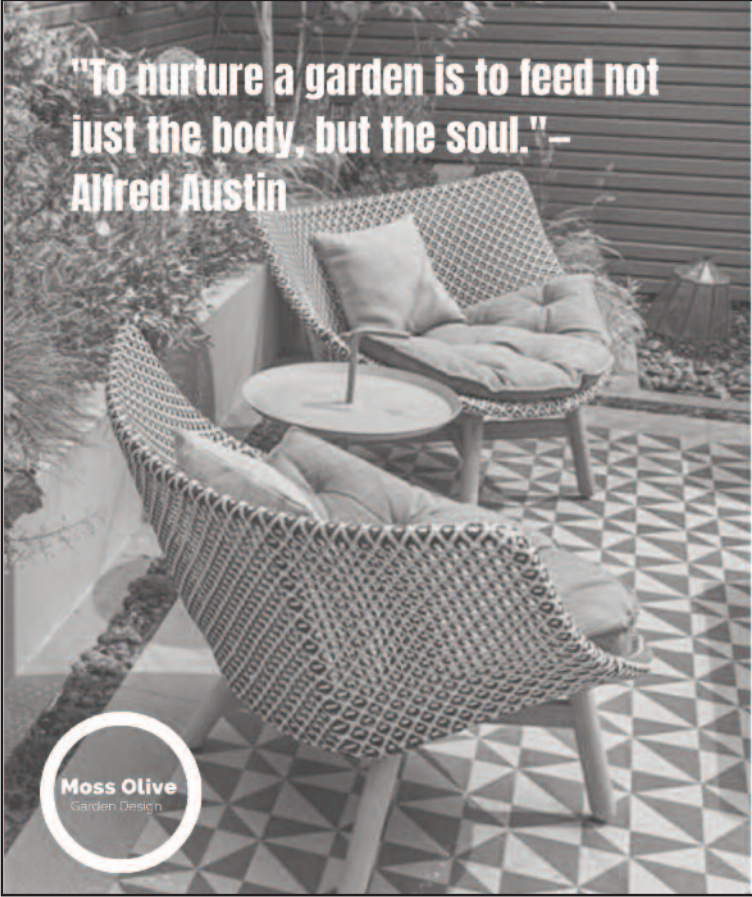


live in flats, a few complaints from the residents below. (And I'm not being sexist when I say 'girls' as no 'boys' attend our

Dance or Legs, Bums & Tums classes.)

Children : Some small people have found it very amusing to watch mum hopping about and waving her arms around. Sometimes they try to join in, causing mum to fall over them then have to leave the class to comfort the child who, understandably, doesn't like being trodden on.

Pets : Being small and sneaky (cats especially), they creep in unnoticed then, like the children, can get trodden on. Or



## Moss Olive Garden Design

Moss Olive design, build and maintain high quality gardens in Greenwich and Blackheath.

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# WHAT'S ON

## TV/FILM REVIEWS



Sally-Anne Morgan lives in Blackheath and shares her lockdown TV and a film recommendation

To date, my favourite series has been **‘The Crown’** on Netflix. I started watching it during the Spring and fell in love with it during the first episode. I was overjoyed at the visual extravaganza and the casting. I thought Claire Foy was incredible playing the Queen. She really captured the sense of duty and honour that Queen Elizabeth herself always portrays. The contrast between the Queen and Princess Margaret is portrayed throughout. Yet their love for each other shines through, even though their lives are polar opposites. Vanessa Kirby is excellent as Margaret. She is one of my favourite actresses. She also stars in the film **‘Pieces of a Woman’** on Netflix. Her American accent is flawless.

I also thought John Lithgow was brilliant as Churchill. A good actor playing a strong part is always so intriguing and life-affirming.

The series of the moment has to be **‘Bridgerton’**. Never before has a period drama series captured the nation in the way that this colourful, intriguing and stunningly set episodes has. The anticipation that builds whilst the local gossip rapidly makes its way around the town has us all watching and waiting for the next engagement, affair, invitation to tea or lavish ball to happen. The handsome heart-throb and the pretty young lady are constantly on each other’s toes, sometimes with honesty, sometimes not!! Another great British series is

**‘Motherland’**. Series 1 is on Netflix. The contrast between the mothers and one father is so watchable. It explores modern motherhood and the competitive streak that comes with the mothers all vying to be the best and cope with as much on their plate as they can possibly can. Amanda is always fighting to keep her place as Top Dog. The lone father has a very controlling wife (who we never meet); he’s always trying to do as she says and is always stressed and flustered. There are lots of laugh out loud moments.

**Film**  
**‘Military Wives’** on Amazon Video is a must-see. The contrast between the fantastic Sharon Horgan and Kristen Scott-Thomas makes the beginning of the film particularly enjoyable. Then as we learn the truth about the characters and the choir gets underway, we see the good side of the two choir leaders, along with much laughter and some tears too. The film portrays that good can come from heartache and tragedy. It is a performance by the whole cast of hope, love, understanding and bonding. We can all do with a positive message right now.

## The Dutch House by Ann Pratchett Book Review

The Dutch House tells the story of Maeve and Danny, devoted siblings, cast asunder and left to fend for themselves after an idyllic childhood spent in a roomy mansion on the outskirts of Philadelphia. This is a book that lures you in and invites you to take a seat by the fireside and read beyond lights out, just for the pleasure of it. Feeling like a bystander marvelling at the almost fairytale-like devotion between brother and sister reminding me of my own halcyon days. I’m left to wonder how, out of such a seemingly enjoyable read. I could wonder

at the contrasts of life and the whys and wherefores of what makes people become what they are. While it only shimmers in the background, the unfolding of these characters seems to reflect an America wrestling with itself. You’re left asking questions that cannot really be answered. Like in life you make your choices and try not to think too much of what could have been. Like with all great books, I learnt from reading it, that it was a lesson for myself, more than it was for any of the protagonists. *Jo Burnand*

## Music from the Royal Opera House

Feast your senses with a real treat, - stream opera from the Royal Opera House straight into your living room for a reasonable price! The ROH has a host of pre-recorded operatic extravaganzas for you to watch throughout February, including:  
Andrea Chenier from 2015, featuring world-famous Tenor Jonas Kaufmann, David McVicar’s historically detailed production brings Giordano’s French Revolution opera thrillingly alive.

Or treat yourself on Valentine’s Day, to: **Marguerite and Armand (2017)** 20 January–14 February 2021  
Online only  
**Ballet and dance**  
Frederick Ashton’s passionate ballet, set to Liszt’s tempestuous Piano Sonata, recalls the tragic love affair between the courtesan Marguerite, and her lover Armand. To find out more and book tickets, visit: <https://www.roh.org.uk/>

## Online Singing with Emma Bond

Never before have we needed to think about how effectively we breathe. By developing our breathing techniques we can travel towards emotional stability and mental well being. So why not lift your spirits during lockdown with Emma Bond, who is offering a host of online singing experiences throughout the week on Zoom:

1. The Listening Hour 7.30pm Sunday £3 This relaxing music appreciation class is the perfect way to wind up the weekend. Throughout February the theme will be ‘German Lied’.
2. Sing Together Tuesdays 10am £6 Continuing until we can meet in choirs, this is the first of the week’s online singing community choir rehearsals. Accessible, fun and featuring visiting guests this session is designed to leave you feeling uplifted and ready to face the day ahead. Each

week we catch up with our resident CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) counsellor who motivates and inspires plus there is a weekly Musical Theatre quiz too.  
3. Friday Fundraiser for Nightingale Music Fridays 10am The second chance of the week to come together in song. All monies raised go towards the charity, Nightingale Music - to provide free music sessions for adults with additional needs and their carers.  
4. ‘Breath and the Voice - a fortnightly workshop for our time. Thursday 4th February 10am - 11.15am £6  
For Zoom links and further information regarding any of these activities, please go to [www.singtogether.org.uk](http://www.singtogether.org.uk)



If you have any events, happenings or entertainment you’d like publicised, please email: [wnews@westcombesociety.org](mailto:wnews@westcombesociety.org). Polly and our readers look forward to hearing from you.

## Poetry STILL EUROPEAN

Still European is a zoom poetry event hosted by **in-words** in collaboration with the Mary Evans Picture Library Poetry and Pictures Blog curated by Gill Stoker.  
**Thursday 25th February at 7.30**  
Sarah Lawson, Fiona Moore, Gabriel Moreno, John McCullough, Emma Page, Jacqueline Saphra and Richard Westcott will read their poems on a European theme and display the pictures that inspired them. They will also read their favourite poem by a European poet in translation and share the original.  
**Free by invitation. Email [irena@in-words.co.uk](mailto:irena@in-words.co.uk) to be sent a Zoom link the day before the event.**

## CLEOPATRA: Images of a Dream Woman

Artists love to reimagine the Queen of Egypt, for whose love’s sake Mark Antony is supposed to have given up his chance to rule the Roman world. Showing pictures by Michelangelo, Tiepolo, Delacroix, Moreau, and many others, as well as stills from some fabulously extravagant films, Lucy Hughes-Hallett discusses what these gorgeous images can tell us about racial politics and erotic fantasy over two millennia.  
This lecture will be presented on Zoom Members will receive email joining instructions. Guests are welcome for £5 - please email [ticaclark@hotmail.com](mailto:ticaclark@hotmail.com) for further details.  
**Lecturer: Lucy Hughes Hallett 7pm Monday 8th February 2021 Arts Society Greenwich [www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk)**

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# FEATURES

## A Hidden Gem at Charlton House?

The Summerhouse at Charlton House received a renovation grant of £47k from Historic England in 2020, but obviously, due to the present circumstances, work on renovating it has been delayed. It is thought to have been designed by the ground-breaking architect of the 17th century, Inigo Jones, who also designed The Queen's House in Greenwich. Since such



esteemed beginnings the Summerhouse was bombed in WWII - a German V2 rocket landed next to the main house causing significant damage and repair work was undertaken by the Metropolitan Borough of Greenwich in the 1940's when much of the structure was replaced with London Stock Brick. In 1936 the Council converted the building into a toilet block!

Charlton House, built between 1607 and 1612, is considered to be the best surviving example of a Jacobean Manor House in London. Built in the 1630s, twenty years after the main house and following the new classical austerity of Palladianism At a time when the Newton family were residing in the main

house, the Summerhouse's purpose is presumed to have been that of a prospect house, for use during the summer months for dining and enjoying fantastic views over Greenwich and the City of London.

The Summerhouse's repurposing as public toilets continued until the 1990s. During 2017 and 2018, thanks to generous grants from the World Monuments Fund and a donation from the Friends of Charlton House, the Trust carried out works to remove the majority of the 1946 repairs, without damaging the original fabric of the building. This work was carried out by students from London South East College under the direction of architect Charlie MacKeith.

The generous grant from Historic England will allow for essential investigations, develop-



ment work and repair to take place, which will form part of a much larger restoration project. The vision of Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust is to restore the building to its original condition and put the building back into use, allowing public access and enjoyment.

WN asked Neil Rhind for any information he had on the Summerhouse. This was his reply: ...The Inigo Jones story is a myth. A A R Martin in his definitive monograph on Charlton House (1929) dismisses it and so does John Smith in his 3-vol History of Charlton (1970s). Also, it is not on John Rocque's environs of London plan of about

1741-1745 (when published). Smith records its conversion into public lavatories by GBC at a cost of £880 in 1936. Damaged in the last war but restored subsequently.... Thank you Neil, although sad to hear that the Inigo Jones provenance might not be correct.

## New book Blackheath Village & Environs, vol III

Anyone who walks around this area intrigued by its architecture, and wanting to know more, will find Blackheath Village & Environs, vol III (published Jan 2021) a valuable aid to satisfying their curiosity. For example did you know Heath Lane was originally called Love Lane and once a secret footpath from Lee to the Heath? Or that Eastnor House was the home of the Burndepts, the manufacturers of Ethophone wireless sets - the 'Rolls Royce' of early radios.

The book's author, Neil Rhind, is Blackheath's own eminent historian on the social and architectural development of Blackheath. Neil is a tireless campaigner for the preservation of its historic and environmental qualities, playing a major role in the rescue and restoration of many local historic buildings including The Blackheath Concert Hall and Vanbrugh Castle. In 1998 he was awarded the MBE for services to local conservation.

The first volume of the series appeared in 1976 and the second in 1983. Because of the size of the latest issue, Neil had to leave out a substantial chapter on north-west Blackheath, covering Chesterfield Walk, Crooms Hill and Hyde Vale - which are all in the Royal Borough of Greenwich - so Blackheath Greenwich will eventually



### BLACKHEATH VILLAGE & ENVIRONS 1790-2000

by Neil Rhind

Volume III: Blackheath in Lewisham parish  
Blackheath in Lee parish

form Volume IV.

The third volume has 610 pages with 263 illustrations and maps and covers Lewisham and Lee parishes. Priced at £20, it is available now from the Society and can be bought at Waterstones and the Bookshop on the Heath once Covid restrictions allow them to re-open. You can buy the book from the Society's website at [www.blackheath.org](http://www.blackheath.org) or by emailing [office@blackheath.org](mailto:office@blackheath.org).

**Blackheath Village & Environs, vol III** contains detailed history and residents' lists for:  
-Grotes Buildings, Eliot Place and Eliot Hill including the "lost house" called Eliot Lodge  
-Hollyhedge House and its windmill  
-Dartmouth Row with some remaining late 17th century houses  
-Blackheath in the parish of Lee including Lee Terrace to Lee Road; Dacre House and its developed estate; Belmont Hill (and the house which gave it its name) and Marischal Road, pronounced Marshall Road.

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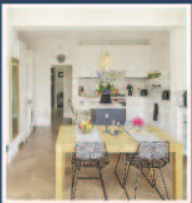


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# ENVIRONMENT



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](http://www.greenwich.gov.uk/planning)

## News from Greenwich Park Maggie Gravelle

Part of the pleasure of living in Westcombe Park is the proximity to Greenwich Park and this has been even more valuable during Covid restrictions. But the pandemic is not without its impact on the park.

### 1. Greenwich Park Revealed

Following detailed planning and extensive public consultation the park was successful in achieving Heritage Lottery Funding for the Greenwich Park Revealed scheme.

However, because of additional expenditure, due to the pandemic, the budget has had to be reduced. The main impact of this will be on changes to the Learning Centre and wildlife area. A more modest development is now planned and at a meeting in December these plans were outlined.

There will be a period of consultation before the revised plans are submitted to the Council. However, some concern has already been expressed at the proposals to create an 'active wilderness' with 'natural play elements' including tree stump seating and climbing possibilities, which could disturb the balance between wildlife and accessibility.

### 2. Movement Strategy

The consultation has now closed and a final decision is expected in mid February. The Westcombe Society submitted comments to The Royal Parks. In essence we welcomed the closure of The Avenue to through traffic, saying "The absence of traffic in the Park has led to a quieter, calmer and safer environment, with considerably better air quality and this is to be welcomed." However, we expressed our concern at the possible effect on traffic in the surrounding streets. We recognised that there were several factors that might be causing local congestion; the Hills and Vales scheme in West Greenwich, the installation of cycle lanes on Trafalgar Road and changes in travel habits due to the pandemic. We noted that RBG are currently considering changes to traffic regulations to the east of the Park and therefore, although we would not wish to see commuter traffic return to the Park, feel that any permanent decision should be delayed until traffic levels return to some sort of equilibrium. "Only then will it be clear whether the remaining routes can cope with the level of traffic in the future 'normal'."

### 3. Covid-19

Greenwich Park remains exceedingly busy despite the weather and it is noticeable that the grass edging many of the paths is being damaged and that new 'desire paths' are being created. A twenty minute walk is a recommended form of exercise and it might be a good idea to explore some of the routes that are less frequented. The police

have spent much of their time explaining and enforcing Covid regulations, particularly the ban on large groups.

On occasion the area around General Wolfe has been cordoned off to avoid overcrowding. There has also been an increase in unauthorised cycling and many of those who have been stopped appear not to have been aware of the restrictions. New signs are planned for the spring. In general the level of crime in the Park remains very low although in London as a whole there has been a rise in snatch theft using bicycles and e-scooters, which are silent, and one such case was reported in the Park in the last quarter.

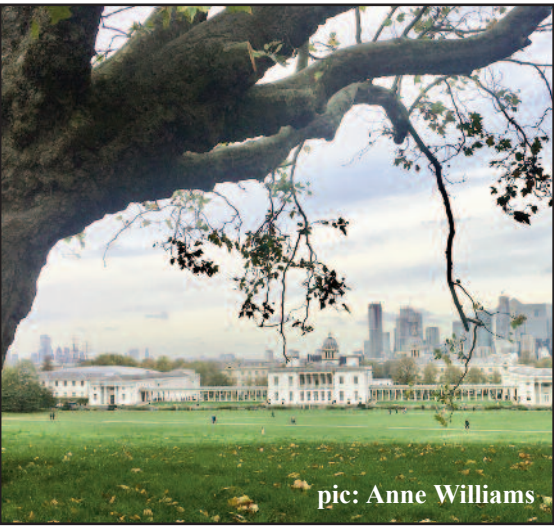
### 4. E-scooters

Following the last point - a reminder about e-scooters. Currently, it is illegal for privately-owned e-scooter to use the highways or the public pavements. This is being reviewed, but until any change they are banned from the Park and there are no plans to change this. TRP recently issued a statement, "We believe that the speed and stealth of the scooters presents an unacceptable risk to pedestrians, particularly those with mobility challenges, or with a visual or hearing impairment. Allowing e-scooters to operate in the parks could therefore discourage those who wish to walk to and through the parks and undermine the peace and ambience of the green spaces."

### 5. Rose Garden

When roses become old it is inadvisable to re-plant with roses in the same place, so several beds have been devoted to wildflowers and others have been replanted with perennials. The wildflower beds were particularly appreciated and many visitors requested more information about the seeds. The Friends of Greenwich Park newsletter gave details of the supplier - [www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk](http://www.pictorialmeadows.co.uk). Now would be a good time to order them on-line in preparation for the spring sowing season.

The Westcombe Society is represented on Greenwich Park Stakeholders and Greenwich Safer Parks Panel and many residents are also Friends of Greenwich Park.



pic: Anne Williams

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

### 43A VANBRUGH PARK, BARCLAYS BANK ref 21/0209/PN2

To change first floor office into a two-bed dwelling

### 109 MAZE HILL ref 20/3932/HD

To demolish side extension and construct single storey side extension, with rooflights; convert garage into habitable room, and construct new windows and doors to rear and front facades

### 182B WESTCOMBE HILL ref 20/3972/F

To sub-divide into two separate units (1x2 bed and 1x3 bed); construct first floor rear extension, rear dormer roof extension, two rooflights to front, and cycle/refuse storage

### 12A HARDY ROAD ref 20/3914/F

To construct single storey rear extension 174, 176 and 178 LANGTON WAY ref 20/3877/F

To install high level fence to front boundary

### 15 VANBRUGH HILL ref 20/3859/HD

To construct single storey rear infill extension.

### TREE WORKS

63 COLERAINE ROAD ref 21/0242/TC In front garden fell purple plum. In rear garden reduce lime all round by 1m.

### FERNDAL COURT, WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 21/0170/TP

Lift yew, holly, beech, conifers, hawthorne to clear footpath. Re-pollard plane tree. Crown reduce yew by 1m.

## Silvertown Tunnel Preparations underway

Marilyn Little

The Silvertown Tunnel, a public-private partnership (PPP), is intended to provide resilience and reduce congestion through the Blackwall Tunnel. The plan is for both tunnels to be tolled when Silvertown opens in 2025.

It will include bus lanes and be able to accommodate double-decker buses, which is not the case for the Blackwall Tunnel, which was built over 100 years ago, for

foot, cycle, horse-drawn and vehicular traffic.

Currently, six single-deck buses per hour use the Blackwall Tunnel; TfL say the new tunnel will allow for 20+ buses per hour from its opening, increasing over time.

Although people will not be able to walk and cycle through the tunnel, TfL is currently studying options to aid active travel across the river. Consideration is being given, for example, to a cyclists' shuttle and to changing the way in which the cable car is used. The tunnel will also be able to take taller commercial vehicles that cause stoppages at the Blackwall Tunnel due to its height restriction.

The contract for construction was awarded in November 2019 by TfL to Riverlinx who will design, build, and finance the works before operating and maintaining the Tunnel for a period of 25 years starting from the permit to use date. TfL will not begin making repayments to Riverlinx until the tunnel has been built and opened. TfL also is not liable for additional costs or delays.

Before work can start on the construction of the tunnel various preparatory works need to be carried out.

The Pressure Reduction System needed by Southern Gas Networks in relation to the old gasholder site needs relocating and the coach parks will be moved closer to the Emirates Airline area. It is also necessary to replace the Boord Street Bridge pedestrian bridge across the Tunnel Approach to the peninsula. The design of the new bridge is being undertaken by Riverlinx with review and approval by TfL and the Royal Borough of Greenwich. A meeting is planned with local stakeholders to seek their views. This will happen after the lockdown restrictions are lifted.

These preliminary works will allow for the construction of the Tunnel Portal and the Rotation chamber for the Tunnel Boring Machine. Non-hazardous waste from these works will be transported

through the Blackwall Tunnel to Silvertown where they will be transported by river to landfill. Hazardous waste will be transported via trunk roads to specialist contractors south of the river.

These works will take place during 2021 alongside the construction of the Tunnel Boring Machine Launch Chamber and a multi storey car park. An indicative date for tunnelling to commence is 2022.



The Westcombe Society along with other community groups, councillors, TfL and Riverlinx attend a quarterly Community Liaison Group which is an update on the works programme. We hope to provide an update in the Westcombe News following subsequent meetings.

**Further details regarding Environmental, Noise and Pollution measures can be found on the RBG Planning website by searching for 'Silvertown'.**

Note: The Westcombe Society opposed the construction from the start. New roads usually generate more traffic in the long run and, although the modelling at the time of planning consent claimed that the introduction of tolls on both tunnels will mean no overall increase in traffic and an overall improvement in air quality, the modelling shows that pollution will increase in some areas. There is also concern that there would be increased congestion and pollution on other routes as drivers seek to avoid the tolls and concern that the introduction of tolls on river crossings in East London is detrimental to residents and businesses whilst roads and crossings to the west are not tolled. Although the new tunnel will sit within the extended Ultra Low Emission Zone a wide group of experts and organisations, including the Westcombe Society, feel that the way in which ULEZ might mitigate problems caused by the tunnel is not fully understood. This, plus the changing traffic patterns and financial problems caused by the pandemic, mean that these groups are currently arguing for a full reassessment of such an expensive project.

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