

Westcombe NEWS

Free to 3800 homes, in libraries and shops and online

September 2021 No.7



Shin: a device for finding furniture in the dark. ~Author unknown

One Not-So-Small Step by Parliament, one Giant Leap Backwards for a Genuine NHS

Health and Social Care Bill 2021-22

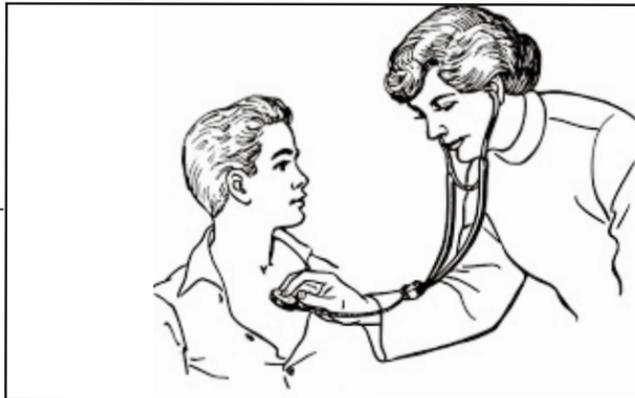
by Prof Allyson Pollock and Peter Roderick

The Government's Health and Care Bill currently working its way through Parliament is a major reorganisation of the NHS in England which will complete the dismantling of it as a universal, comprehensive, publicly funded and provided service free at the point of delivery. It is an astonishing attempt to allow the Secretary of State, an enlarged NHS England as 'rule-maker and regulator', and new public-private 'Integrated Care Boards' (ICBs), to reduce services, limit expenditure, further degrade local accountability and entrench the market. Doctors contacted by the WN are extremely critical of the proposals.

These proposals could have a big impact on the delivery of local services in Greenwich and Lewisham.

If Parliament enacts this Bill:

1. There will no longer be a statutory duty on anybody to arrange provision of secondary (i.e. hospital) medical services – only a power for ICBs to do so;
2. ICBs will only have a "core responsibility" for a "group of people" in accordance with enrolment rules made by NHS England, evoking the US definition of a health maintenance organisation which provides "basic and supplemental health services to its members";
3. It will be possible for ICBs to award and extend contracts for health care services of unlimited value without advertising, including to private companies;
4. Private health companies will be able to be members of ICBs, their committees and subcommittees, which will plan NHS services and decide how to spend NHS money;



Regular hands-on doctoring soon to become extinct?

5. NHS England will have new powers to impose limits on expenditure by NHS trusts and NHS foundation trusts;
6. Integrated care partnerships will be set up as joint committees of local authorities and ICBs to draw up integrated care strategies, with no restrictions on membership and without clear transparency obligations;
7. Payments will be determined by NHS England after consultation with providers, including private providers, and can distinguish between different types of providers, different groups of patients and different types of services;
8. Local authority representation on ICBs will be limited to one member covering (usually) several local authorities, whilst the more local 'place-based' ICB committees will not have power to determine their budgets;
9. Local authority powers to refer reconfigurations will be affected because the Secretary of State is to be given new intervention powers, but exactly how is unclear.

The Bill does nothing to:

- rebuild and restore local, primary medical services, community, mental health and hospital services (e.g., staffing and beds) which the covid-19 pandemic has exposed as being seriously inadequate after years of service closures and cuts;
- address the failings of the centralised communicable disease control system, and wider public health system, revealed during the covid-19 pandemic;
- address the broken social care system with which health services are supposed to be integrated;
- prevent corporate take-overs of GP

Readers may think that there are many reasons why these proposals are objectionable, and make the Government's calls on us to "Save Our NHS" pretty hollow. The plans open the door to both centralisation and privatisation of services – and indeed the denial of, and payment for, services on grounds not even disclosed. If you object, write with your reasons to:

Matt Pennycook MP, The Houses of Parliament, Westminster, London, or email matthew.pennycook.mp@parliament.uk, requesting that he makes representation to the government.

To further understand this proposed Bill, there is an authoritative overview of the privatisation and Americanisation of England's NHS to be found on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/7vjoR7LnDqU>

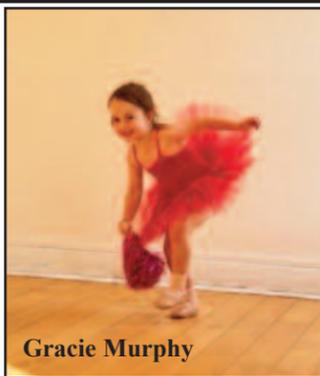
-WN Editorial Team



Eva Murphy

SCHOOL'S BACK!

Six weeks have sped by with many families managing to negotiate at least a week's holiday amid the rules and regulations of pandemic life. But now it's time to put away the hula hoops and hang up the ballet shoes (at least on school days) to focus on lessons and homework! It's just as fun - honest!



Gracie Murphy

Red to Green with Traffic Changes?

Residents will be aware that the traffic filter on Hyde Vale is now allowing through traffic for two hours from 7am to 9am Monday to Friday to reduce congestion in the areas East of Greenwich Park. Alongside this the temporary width restrictions in Greenwich Town Centre have also been removed.

Both these actions have had an effect on local traffic flow. However.. we are in the holiday period and

traffic volumes are, as usual, lower than normal.

Residents have been asked to report how the above changes have affected them and we would urge you to respond, but to reflect on traffic levels once they have returned to more normal volumes after schools have re-opened in September.

Responses to.. royalgreenwich.gov.uk/westgreenwich.

-Marilyn Little

Newsbriefs * * * *

Charity Shops Go Online

A new online shopping platform has been launched. BuyCharity.com exclusively sells items from charities and community interest companies (CICs), bringing the much-loved charity shopping experience to the web.

Phil Whiteley, Partnership Development Manager at Age UK South Lakeland, says "We've already got hundreds of items for sale, from top-end fashion, electronics to unique antiques and collectibles. Shoppers can browse in much the same way they would on other e-commerce sites, or they can choose to buy solely from the charities they support. They can create alerts for particular items, and even make item requests so that charities can check their inventories for a much-wanted item."

Get Active! Win Prizes!

Residents in Royal Greenwich can access a new phone app to help them become more active.

The Street Tag app will be used to engage

and incentivise residents and schools to walk and cycle around the borough. Players collect points which can be turned into prizes.

Street Tag is entertaining and highly competitive. Councillor Adel Khairah, Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities, said: "Sometimes getting active can seem like an effort but Street Tag makes it fun, go out with your children or compete against your friends and neighbours, or join your children's School Leaderboard and win great prizes for them!"

Points are earned by scanning virtual tags around the borough, converting steps movement into Street Tag points, as well as points for attending local sport and physical activity sessions, leisure centres and libraries.

For more information www.streettag.co.uk, and download the app on the Play Store, and App Store.

Know Your Boundaries

The Boundary Commission for England conducted a review of the changes necessary due

to the need to adjust for 20 years of change to the distribution of electors since the data on which the existing constituencies are based was established. The Westcombe Society was able to support the local BCE recommendations as the links in our constituency to encourage community ties are maintained.

Greenwich Foot Tunnel

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is advising people who use the Greenwich foot tunnel that the current repairs needed to lifts on both sides of the river could take up to five months to complete. Until repairs are made, the lifts cannot be operated, but access to the tunnel via the stairs will remain open 24 hours per day.

The time needed for the repairs is due to the unique historic nature of the lifts, which require detailed conservation plans to be approved and bespoke parts to be made in order to get them running again.

Congratulations, Denise!

Former local resident, and reporter for the Westcombe News, Denise Scott-McDonald, is not only Deputy Leader of Greenwich Council, she has just been appointed President of the National Members Council for the Co-operative Group, which helps to ensure that the action of the Co-op benefit members, workers and the community.

And Finally....

A resident who has been communicating with WN over her uncollected and increasingly smelly green bin, sent this in just before we went to press, ".....finally collected today. According to the driver our address had been omitted from the list so they didn't know that this property was on their route.

"What can you say? Managers who are paid good salaries are unable to compile accurate lists and take six weeks to respond to online communications?"

NEIGHBOURHOOD

WESTCOMBE NEWS

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MATERIAL TO BE SENT TO:
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Deadline for October copy:
16th September 2021

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environment

ADVERTISING

Jenny Senerat
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Deadline for Advertising:
16th September 2021

DISTRIBUTION

Emily Norton and volunteers
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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>



Congratulations to all local students who kept up with their studies during difficult times and who received good grades this year. Above are three very happy students from The John Roan School holding their exam results (L to R) Lorina Hoti, Lulu Pennicot-Banks and Hodhan Hirsi.

A PLEASANT CHANGE FOR THE PLEASAUNCE CAFÉ

Gary Doherty and Debora Greico are the new owners of the East Greenwich Pleasaunce Park café. They have reopened the café with a fresh, clean on trend look - think marble counters, rattan lamp shades and slick furniture imported from Italy. The terrace has been covered with faux grass, making it pleasant for children to play on whilst parents enjoy a coffee or a glass of rosé!

Not only has the interior changed, the menu has also changed. Gary is an accomplished chef who has worked all over the world, from the QEII to Michelin-starred restaurants, super yachts for the rich and famous and, up until two years ago, his own restaurant in SW London. "We worked hard to make our business the best and ended up at 333 out of 19,800 restau-

rants in London in TripAdvisor. We were also voted Top Brunch Spot in Time Out" he said proudly.

His repertoire knows no bounds and he is currently feeding the people of SE3/10 the most delicious cinnamon buns, home made sausage rolls amongst freshly prepared salads and great specials of the day.

His business partner Debora is from Puglia in Italy; they met eight years ago when Debora managed Gary's restaurant in SW London. It was always Debora's dream to have her own business and now that dream has become reality.

This new café is fast becoming the place to meet locally in one of the most quirky parks in SE London. I know we want to keep it a secret, but this little gem needs to be shouted about!



New owners Debora Greico and Gary Doherty (with Victoria Doherty in the background).



The Heath is playing host (for two weeks) to the Extinction Rebellion 'out of towners' coming in to protest the Financial Sector's support of fossil fuels.



Letters

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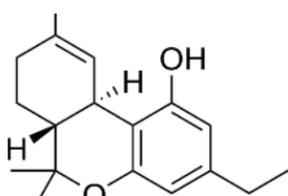
Dear Westcombe News
Opening up the Avenue in Greenwich Park to morning traffic will certainly not be a short-term solution because there will be no short-term change in the serious traffic problems in our Borough.

As soon as it opens it will be under great pressure to stay open.

It is a weak, regressive move that will bring pollution and environmental damage back to a wonderful green space we are so lucky to have and should be protecting.

I hope Royal Parks push firmly back on this. The council need to own and deal with the traffic problems on their roads, not dump them on Greenwich Park.
Vivien Davies

Dear Westcombe News
Full marks and great respect for including actual chemical structures in your article about CBD/THC. One small, heinous error (a missing double bond in



THC's middle ring) does not detract from a commitment to actual science that is rarely seen in a local paper.

Professor Matthew H. Todd
Chair of Drug Discovery
University College London
Head of Research Department
(Pharmaceutical and Biological

Chemistry)
(Pic credit Wikipedia)

From: Neville Grant, Stratheden Road

On July 5th this year, the Queen awarded the NHS the George Cross for its courageous and dedicated service during the Covid pandemic. The Prime Minister regularly stands at a lectern displaying the legend "Protect our NHS".

Yet in January this government launched a White Paper in preparation for legislation that will dismantle the NHS and turn it into a cash cow for private corporations. If this government has its way, our country will have a system similar to that in the USA, which privileges those with money. Healthcare in the

United States is more than twice as expensive per head of population compared with the UK, and delivers worse outcomes with lower life expectancy, and higher infant and maternal mortality. It also delivers huge profits for private corporations.

The 2012 Health Care bill already started this process - in the same year that the London Olympics celebrated the NHS. Readers, beware! These proposals have already been roundly condemned by most medical professionals. We urge all our MPs, of whatever political persuasion, to strongly oppose these proposals, which echo George Orwell's Animal Farm: "All patients are equal, but some are more equal than others" - supported, it will be recalled, by the sheep.

Volunteering Opportunity

GREENWICH & WOOLWICH LIONS CLUB are looking for new members aged 16 years and above.

For more than a century Lions volunteers across the world have served local communities by volunteering their time to help good causes. Alongside a focus on local community service, Lions get involved with five common causes: Diabetes, Vision, Hunger, Environment and Childhood Cancer.

KINDNESS IN ACTION

Do you have some time to spare and would you like to help others while making new friends? Would you consider finding out more and maybe join the club? For more details please email:

y.nariman2018@gmail.com

We meet on the third Monday of each month from 8.00pm to 9.30pm. In addition to these regular times, we also meet for fundraising and specific volunteering events.

Congratulations Lorna!



Lorna Hall celebrated her 100th birthday with family and friends at Tudor Grange in August.

New Vicar for St George's

The Reverend Laura Faturoti, assistant curate at Christ Church, Dartford, has been appointed as a Team Vicar in the East Greenwich Team Ministry, with particular responsibility for St George's, Westcombe Park. Laura will be licensed to the East Greenwich Team Ministry on Tuesday 14th September.

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SPORTS & FITNESS

LET'S ALL ENJOY A SPORT PLEASE!

Sponsor our South London Special League London Marathon runners and Support One Game, One Love Tennis in Greenwich Park

Local woman Helen Marley-Hutchinson, along with her friend Miren Davies are running in the London Marathon on Sunday 3rd October 2021, to raise funds and awareness of a 'sports for all' charity, the South London Special League. Team-mates Olwen Davies, Olga Bonde and Rachel Mai-Jones are taking part in the virtual London Marathon: fifty thousand runners globally, running their route, their way.

So, what is the South London Special League charity and why has this group of local women chosen to support it? "Sports keep bodies and minds healthy and happy" says Helen, "Sharon Brokenshire MBE was my neighbour on Siebert Road. She inspired me with the amazing work she was doing with South London Special League, and this led to my desire to help others to get the benefits from sports as I do."

South London Special League is a small local charity with a big impact. It supports some of the most vulnerable people in our community with much-needed opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged people to meet, connect and improve their physical and mental wellbeing. The One Game, One Love Tennis Project is one of these initiatives, holding weekly tennis sessions in Greenwich Park so Special Leaguers like Danny, David, Jonathan, Adam and Jack can get active, meet friends and have fun.

Jack's Story

Covid restrictions meant players like Jack have had almost no contact with the outside world for over a year.

Jack is a very active individual with learning difficulties. Unable to communi-

ued part of the group which gives him great confidence with no worries or stresses. Jack loves these sessions. You can see this in his body language."

"I'm over the moon that the great work being done by the charity to improve the lives of disabled people is being recognised by our council and community." Sharon Brokenshire MBE, Founder and Director of South London Special League

Watch out for Helen, Miren, Olga, Olwen and Rachel as they run the streets of London on Sunday 4th October for South London Special League.

Deputy Mayor of Greenwich, Leo Fletcher, says; "Every penny you donate goes towards keeping the great work of South London Special League going. The Westcombe News is delivered to 3,800 houses every month. If each of those houses donated £1 that would keep South London Special League Tennis in Greenwich Park going for another year."

Donate here: Running for South London Special League
<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/RunningforSouthLondonSpecialLeague1>
South London Special League website
<https://slsl2013.wordpress.com>



South London Special League Tennis Photo - David, Jack, Adam, Helen and Coach James Maloney

cate by speech, locked down and isolated with just his family for company, Jack felt increasingly frustrated and alone.

Now the lockdown restrictions have eased, Jack can return to his friends and the community support of South London Special League.

Jack's personal assistant, Lisa, who accompanies him to his tennis lessons says:

"This is the one session where Jack feels free and doesn't suffer from the pressure of being restrained by any restrictions. Jack can socialise safely. He knows he is a val-

THE WESTCOMBE SOCIETY

AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED

Our AGM was very well attended but it was debatable whether that was to hear how the Society had fared over the year or to hear a very well presented illustrated talk on John Julius Angerstein the local entrepreneur. Our thanks to Lynne Dixon a local Historian.

Despite the restrictions that beset us over the last months the Society has continued to support the community thanks to the hard work of our many volunteers who serve on our committees, produce and deliver the Westcombe News, manage our advertising and accounts and continue to enrol new members. I am very grateful for their continuing good work.

We have welcomed a new Advertising Manager and a new Hon Treasurer but our Vice Chair has stood down. Our minutes Secretary is to become our Hon Secretary. I wish to stand down as Chair and as soon as a replacement can be appointed I will take the role of Vice Chair for a short period of handover.

I have been Chair for over 10 years and

whilst I have enjoyed this period I feel that the role should be passed on at more regular intervals to allow for changing approaches and priorities.

Do please consider whether your interests would tempt you to join one of our committees (Environment/Events) or help producing the Westcombe News. Come along to a meeting to see how we work, we would welcome the spread of new ideas and input from all sections and ages of our community.

If interested in the Chair's role we would expect that person to represent the Society and promote its vision and purpose, to have an overview of our varied activities and co-ordinate the management committee.

If you would like more information on the volunteering opportunities we have do get in touch! I would be happy to share further information with you.

Marilyn Little 07939 386215 or Chair@Westcombesociety.org

Brush off those Walking Shoes Macmillan Walk 2021

Keep 11th September free in your diary for this year's terrific Macmillan charity walk from Erith to Greenwich. The Westcombe Society's annual walk raising money for Macmillan Cancer Support not only helps this most worthy of causes. It's always a fun day that sheds fresh light on our precious part of London.

All being well we'll meet at Westcombe Park Station at 9am and catch a train to Erith.

The walk is suitable for adults and children, mostly on the flat, and can be as leisurely or as brisk as you like. There's much to see along this part of the mighty Thames so don't walk too fast! It's about 13 miles from Erith to Greenwich but you can call it a day at Woolwich. No pressure.

From Erith Station we head to the river and turn left at Erith Gardens, heading west along the towpath. Right away you feel you've witnessing the ghost of a bygone time as mudflats and marshes remind you of London's roots. Gulls dive and soar amongst the rusty remains of industrial equipment and buildings, but then round a bend is a lush corner of riverbank. Notable landmarks include an industrial museum and the Thamesmead Estate where A Clockwork Orange was filmed in 1970.

A half mile or so of countryside and you're at Woolwich where you get a first glimpse of Canary Wharf where we'll stop for a well-deserved coffee! Then hugging

The London Marathon returns on Sunday 3rd October 2021

The event will require road closures and parking restrictions in your area.

Up to 48,000 participants will take on the 26.2-mile course, starting at Blackheath, after the mass event was not able to take place in 2020.

Advance warning signs will be displayed in affected roads in the build up to Race Day and stewards will be present on the day itself to help answer your queries. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in helping to make the 2021 Virgin Money London Marathon a success.

2019's Virgin Money London Marathon saw the event raise over £60million for charities and saw the event surpass £1 billion mark for charity fundraising since its inception in 1981.

ROAD CLOSURE TIMES

Short sections of Shooters Hill Road and Charlton Way will close at 04:00 to enable the installation of the Start Area gantries. There will be a small diversion via Princes Charles Road and Prince of Wales Road to get around the early closure on Shooters Hill Road.

Local roads in the area will then close at 07:00 to secure the race route, including: Shooters Hill Road, St John's Park, Old Dover Road, Charlton Way, Vanbrugh Park, Charlton Road, Charlton Park Road, Charlton Park Lane and Woolwich Road (A206).

Continued on Environment page.....

the river at Woolwich Arsenal with its mix of modern art, grand Victorian buildings and eateries. Then on to Greenwich, passing the yacht club, the Emirates cable cars and the O2.

There's a £10 subscription per person for the walk, 100% of which goes to Macmillan. By all means do your own fundraising too. A bottle of water will be supplied.

To book your place call Tessa Cross on 07939 939514 or email Tessa at tessalewiscross@gmail.com

-Diane Blackwell

Join Us for Coffee and help Macmillan

The Westcombe Society are holding their Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Support on Friday 24th September at Mycenae House Community Centre in Mycenae Road SE3 7SE.

We will be open from 10.00am to 1.00pm serving coffee, delicious home-made cakes and sandwiches. Takeaways available! Payment can be cash or card. To offer help call 07939 386215.

Westcombe Society events for your diary:

11th September
Walk in aid of Macmillan

24th September
Macmillan Coffee Morning (MH)

9th October
Senior Citizens Tea at Mycenae House

27th November
Quiz night at Mycenae House
(Rescheduled Local Treasure Hunt will take place in October)

Party Time is Back!

Diane Blackwell

This year's thank you party at Mycenae House for The Westcombe Society's members and helpers was extra special...for obvious reasons!

Through the pandemic they had done their utmost to help the local community - ensuring The Westcombe News reached everyone as usual and helping our elderly and vulnerable whenever and however they could.

More than 50 people enjoyed a delicious buffet and chatted up a storm. Harpist Tara

provided the music.

Covid may have prevented the Society raising money in 2020 for a local charity, as is the usual tradition, but as a thank you to former Westcombe News editor Neville Grant for his long service, Marilyn Little announced that the Society is giving a donation to Neville's favourite local charity, MumsAid. As ever Neville gave a lively impromptu speech, in keeping with the happy buzz of the evening.

FEATURES

What we are not Teaching our Boys about Being Human

There is a bizarre absence of fully realised human beings in our boys' fictional worlds.

Our girls will likely have read or watched hundreds of stories framed around people, their friendships, relationships and emotions, their internal dramas and the competing emotional needs of others.

But, as a mother of boys, this people-driven story feels oddly alien. As toddlers they were quickly funneled into a vehicle-only narrative reality where human dilemmas may be explored through the emotional lives of fire engines, bulldozers and the occasional stegosaurus.

As they aged out of digger demographic, they transitioned seamlessly into one dominated by battles, fighting, heroes, villains and mainly 'saving the day'.

This narrative world contains almost no emotional complexity, negotiating, nurturing of friendships or internal conflict i.e. none of the mess of being a real human in constant relationship with other humans.

This lack of positive people-focused stories for boys has consequences both for them and for girls. In the narratives they consume, as well as the broader cultural

landscape in which they operate, girls get a huge head start on relational skills, in the day-to-day thorniness and complexity of emotional life.

Probably, because of this difference in socialisation, boys score lower than girls of the same age on virtually all measures of empathy and social skills, a gap that grows throughout childhood and adolescence.

The impact on boys' mental health is also likely to be significant; from a young age girls' friendships tend to be more intimate, deeper and more emotionally focussed, providing a support structure which is often lacking for boys.

The stories we tell become our emotional blueprints; what we come to expect of ourselves and others and how we engage with our lives; in the vast majority of situations we are likely to encounter in the course of a lifetime, there is no hero or villain.

Understanding how to navigate that with grace and skill is the beating heart of human connection.

Wendy Fidler, MEdA Montessori School, Forest School and Well-being Garden

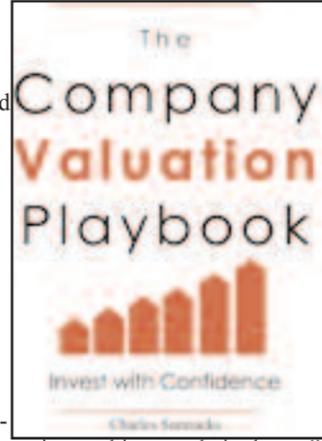
The Company Valuation Playbook

The author of this potentially, highly rewarding, book is a local resident, Charles Sunnucks, who is a renowned investor and fund manager. 'The Company Valuation Playbook' is a step-by-step, jargon-free guide to valuing any company and its shares, with the goal of helping readers maximise their investments. Covering how to assess, project, price and profit - Charlie Sunnucks walks readers through placing a value on any company using nothing more than a computer, the internet, and common sense.

Sounds good so far! In the book the author discusses companies such as Apple, Amazon, Tesla, Microsoft - great companies perhaps - and asks, but are they great investments? This book lifts the veil on how professionals go about valuing a company, bringing a technical subject to life in easy to understand steps. These principle methods can be applied to any company, no matter its size or industry, growth outlook or history.

1. Assess - Learn how to make objective qualitative and quantitative judgements on a company's prospects
2. Project - Develop a simple single line forecast, or full excel nancial model (including an M&A/LBO/bank model)
3. Price - Discover how to apply intrinsic and relative valuation methods

4. Profit - Identify and act on opportunities, while avoiding behavioural biases



Using this complete guide will help you develop from beginner to professional, equipping you with the practical tools to make objective well informed investment choices.

"The book introduces readers, with no prior experience, to industry-standard tools used by the world's leading companies, to value their shares," explains the author.

"You really need zero experience, just a computer, which I guarantee you already have! With my book, you'll be able to apply an accurate valuation to any company, and deem its worth as an investment."

Continuing, "It's normal for excited potential investors to want to jump in and buy stock, but the real profit is made through prior research. My book provides a fast track to making sound, calculated decisions. Ultimately, you'll profit better in the long run."

Reviews have been positive. Stephen Pearson, CIO of Jupiter Asset Management writes, "Smart, methodical and practical". Alexandra Altinger, CEO of J O Hambro Capital adds, "A must read for the aspiring investor".

The Company Valuation Playbook is available now: <https://www.companyvaluation-playbook.com/>

-Mash the sugar and butter together with a fork and then cream with an electric blender for 10 minutes. *continued from previous column....*

-Add the eggs a little at a time along with 1tsp of the flour mix giving it a quick whizz with the blender after each addition.

-Fold in gently half of the flour mix.

-Add the melted chocolate.

-Fold in the rest of the flour mix with enough milk to give a soft dropping consistency.

-Divide between the two tins and bake for 45 - 50 minutes until firm to the touch.

-Allow to cool on a wire rack.

For the buttercream, melt the chocolate as you did for the cake and leave to cool.

-Mash the butter and icing sugar with a fork and then cream with a blender for 5 minutes.

-Pour in the melted chocolate and blend again until smooth.

You might need to add a little milk to make it more spreadable.

-Spread on top of both sponge cakes and sandwich together.

The Best Chocolate Cake Ever

"It Tastes Damn Good!"

The Party Chef



To think what has ended up in shiny wrapped portions on our shop shelves has such a majestic and gruesome history. Considered in its time a gift from the gods, an aphrodisiac, medicine

and currency. South American cultures have been drinking chocolate for almost as long as we've been around. With invasion in the 16th century, first by the Spanish conquistador and the French and English thereafter, this bitter crop made its way to Europe.

The drink remained the preserve of the nobility until in 1729 the world's first cocoa grinder replaced the slow and laborious manual processing of the crop. Not long after Dutchman Conrad J van Houten patented as his own his father's invention of extracting cocoa butter from cocoa mass and in the process inventing cocoa powder. Not long after, Philadelphian Eliza Leslie wrote the first recipe for a chocolate cake.

Often too sweet or too squidgy it's difficult to find a chocolate cake that is both chocolatey and light. With this recipe I've tried to cut down on the sweetness by combining the bitterer muscovado with a little caster. Reducing sugar is awkward because it not only provides sweetness but also provides a structure for water molecules to cling to producing a moister cake. By

creaming it with butter the sugar also drives air into the mix. As the cake bakes these air pockets expand making for an airier cake. I've tried for a more chocolatey flavour by combining cocoa powder with melted chocolate.

50g dark chocolate, melted and allowed to cool

250g plain flour

250g unsalted butter

150g muscovado sugar

50g caster sugar

100g cocoa powder

2 tsp baking powder

3 large eggs

250ml milk approx

For the buttercream:

140g butter

50g dark chocolate melted and allowed to cool

100g icing sugar

50g cocoa powder

2 tbsp milk

-Grease and line the bases of 2 x 20cm springform cake tins with greaseproof paper. Preheat the oven to 170c.

-Sieve together the flour, cocoa powder and baking powder.

-Whisk the eggs together.

-In a glass bowl let the chocolate melt over a simmering pot of water.

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FEATURES

A Close Run Thing

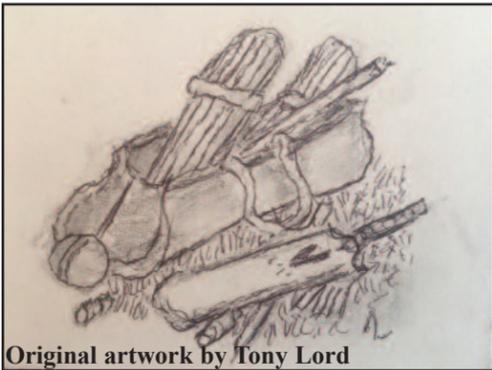
One sunny afternoon forty years ago I decided to go and watch the cricket on the

By Tony Lord

Ranger's Field in Greenwich Park. After Sunday lunch I strolled along Vanbrugh Park, through The Flower Garden and past the bandstand where a silver band was playing a Strauss waltz. In the distance I could see the white clad figures of the cricketers moving about so play had already started. I was informed by an old man seated on a bench near the boundary that our local team, The Westcombe Parkers, was playing the Plumstead Strollers. Their captain had won the toss and had decided to bat first. It was a 20/20 match meaning that each side could bat for twenty overs. I joined the old chap on the bench and watched the Plumstead fellows come and go. Wickets fell quite regularly and at the tea interval they were all out for exactly a hundred. I decided to pop over to the Tea Pavilion and purchase a plastic mug of tea and a homemade rock cake which I shared with a couple of scruffy pigeons back on the bench.

Just after the Westcombe innings started some American tourists turned up behind us and stood watching the play. Eventually one of them approached us and said, "What are those guys doing out there with those sticks and white coats?" I was not going to be drawn into a conversation about long leg, square leg, short leg and leg before wicket so answered tersely that it was cricket and continued watching the

game. Westcombe Parkers were not doing very well until their captain came in and started hitting out. He had scored forty-one but wickets fell at the other end and when the last man joined him the scoreboard read 98 for 9, three runs to win and one more ball to be bowled. The last man was John Porson, rather tubby and the wrong side of fifty. He was no great shakes with the bat. Fortunately the captain had the strike, a



Original artwork by Tony Lord

boundary would do it. The Plumstead bowler, feeling the pressure sent down a slow ball which was driven away towards the boundary but before it could cross the white line a young fielder stationed down there sprinted twenty yards, grabbed the ball and, in the heat of the moment threw it to the wrong end. Meanwhile the captain had completed one run and had turned for the second run while Porson was just reaching the other crease with the result that both batsmen were at the same end. The ball thrown by the youngster hit the captain in the midriff and lay at his feet. Clapping his hand to his stomach the wily old bird collapsed on the ball completely covering it with his body. While someone tried to the resuscitate the recumbent body Porson seized the opportunity to stagger the twenty yards to the other end of the pitch thus bringing up the hundred.

So the game ended honours even. The captain stood up, rubbed his side and shook hands with his opposite number who said, "Well played." Whether he meant the skipper's innings or his play-acting we'll never know.

Podcast Roundup

by Patrick Barry

Many available podcasts are essentially an opportunity to listen to mainstream radio on catch-up: the excellent BBC Sounds app being a great example. Here's a selection of independent podcasts that haven't (yet) popped up on the radio. The comedian and actress Cariad Lloyd hosts Griefcast in which she discusses death and grief with fellow comedians. Lloyd's father died when she was a teenager and she felt that she had not come to terms with it, so began this series of discussions. It's an unexpectedly enjoyable mixture of poignant stories, shared therapy and laughter that reveals more of her guests than a conventional chat might.

Cariad is one of the improvised Jane Austen players in the stage production "Austenacious" where she is joined by Andrew Hunter Murray who happens to be one of the eclectic bunch of researchers behind the odd questions and answers in the TV series "QI". These researchers, better known as the QI Elves, gather around a microphone to produce No Such Thing As A Fish where they exchange and discuss their facts of the week gleaned through their own oddball research. It's an enjoyable romp as four intelligent people enjoy each others' company whilst they head off at tangents for an hour. You'll always learn something that you didn't need to know but can't help but remember.

If you want to hear people ranting about their pet hates then Desert Island Dicks asks guests to decide who and what they would not like alongside them on a desert

island and why.

It's title and premise is a nod to the long running Desert Island Discs but it's format is essentially Room 101. It's a lightheated distraction.

Perhaps you might not wish to be marooned on an island with David Cameron and Lex Greensill, who feature in David Aaronvitch's podcast for the Times, which reveals the story behind the Greensill scandal and Cameron's employment by Greensill and mostly failed attempt to prop up the ailing company with government money through his former contacts whilst he filled his boots. Panorama recently outlined a shortened version of the story that is still unbelievable, despite one knowing the ending. Try the first episode of Cameron and the Toxic Banker and I'm sure you will want more.

Cameron's successor but one as Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, was formerly editor of the Spectator magazine which has been in print since 1828 and recently produced its 10,000th weekly edition. The magazine's journalists gather daily for a twenty minute broadcast chat providing their perspective of what they see as the important aspects of the day's news in the Coffee House Shots podcast. As the magazine is considered politically conservative and libertarian the podcast might either form part of your own Desert Island Dicks choice or your Desert Island Discs choice, but it is stimulating in either case.

The Yellow Suits You!

Whether you are at the tail end of a career or

By Jo Burnand

and putting yourself somewhere you might not necessarily go working for a company that sells one thing alone.

at the beginning and wondering what to do, volunteering in a charity shop can be a way of finding some purpose and learning or keeping in tune skills indispensable for whatever path you choose to take.

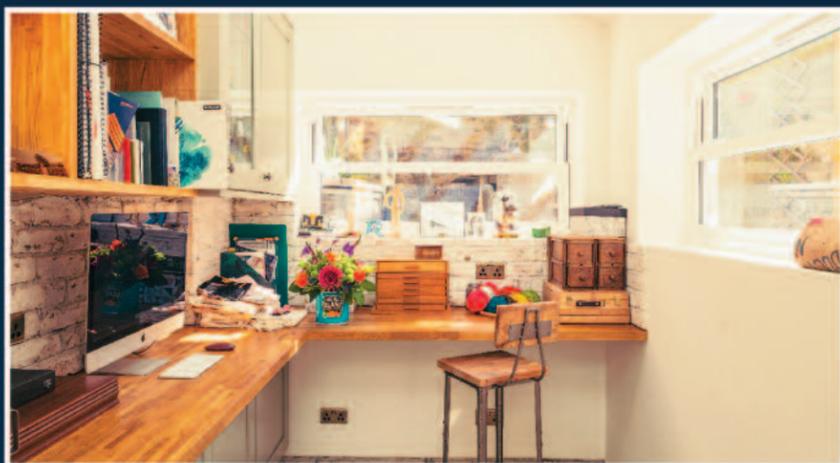
But this is no easy ride. Profit for a charity is almost more essential than it is for larger companies being as they are at the whim of people's generosity. Any skills you have or may have waiting to be discovered will be employed. On my first day I am shown straight to piles of clothing that need transforming from someone's throw-aways to saleable merchandise. The process itself is a wonder of logistics checking for wear and tear, sizing, steaming and pricing. All the while I am accepting donations and persuading customers to sign up to a gift aid scheme which allows the charity to claim back 25p every time an individual donates £1 to its cause.

As a volunteer there is more scope for showing initiative. It is more akin to working on a market stall. You have only so much space in which to make gold out of what you've been given. Suggestions as to how displays might be improved are welcome; combining a mixture of books ordered miscellaneously and alphabetically or mixing up clothes by their colour and their purpose? Either way you are testing your powers of persuasion

What surprised me was how quickly I was put in the driving seat. Out front on the shop floor I'm now the face of the charity where a smile is crucial to the whole operation. I've suddenly got a shop full of customers, a queue starting to pile up, a till that's brought me almost to tears and a customer asking for a reduction on a high street brand that has already been

reduced by at least half. I make the case for how the item has been priced taking into account any wear and tear and await the customer's reaction. Of course someone else will buy the clothing or eventually it'll be reduced if necessary but in a stressful situation I have maintained decorum without any loss of face.

The hardest part in being 'out front' is selling. As another volunteer suggests when I complain no one is actually buying anything, just looking, "You've got to make them buy". Keeping cool under pressure is one thing but charming someone into doing what you want them to do is quite another. Early strides mostly involve extraneous chat before I dare to tell a lady I think she suits that particular shade of yellow. The thing is I really do think it suits her. She knows what suits her but our preceding chat has given me the confidence to say it.



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WHAT'S ON



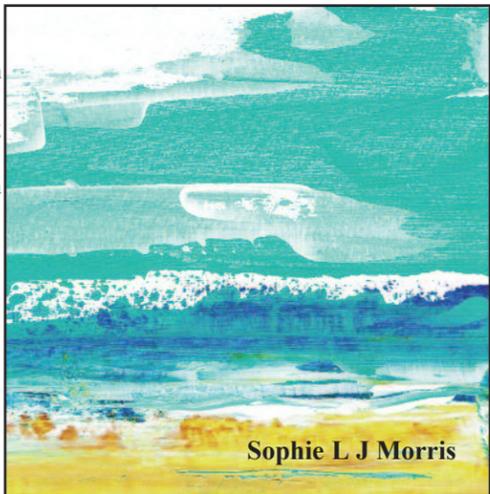
This is Polly Morgan's last What's On page. "Goodbye Polly, thank you for all your hard work! We wish you well in your new endeavours." WN Editorial team

The Return of the In-Person Greenwich Open Studios - Save the Dates!

After two years of Coronavirus lockdown, Greenwich Open Studios (GOS) is back. The Studios will take place on the 11-12th and 18-19th September. Opening times will be on average from 1-6pm on each day although the times may vary slightly. The leaflets with details of each artist's work and their opening times will be available in the Standard local library and Mycenae House but you can check their website at www.greenwichopenstudios.co.uk.

There are 29 artists taking part this year in various parts of Greenwich and Blackheath, with perhaps the most accessi-

ble to Westcombe Park News readers being artists Felicity and Colin Boothman at



Sophie L J Morris

Mycenae House (Sats, 11th & 18th Sept only), Gill Budd nearby at 83 Mycenae Road, Lubna Speitan at 61a Coleraine Road and Sophie Morris in 14 St Johns Park (open both days both weekends).

Everyone exhibiting is fully aware of the need for visitors to stay safe and every GOS member will have safety measures in place. We really hope you can visit us, it's always great fun. All works are for sale. Prices are really competitive but don't feel you have to buy. Browsers and admirers always welcome.

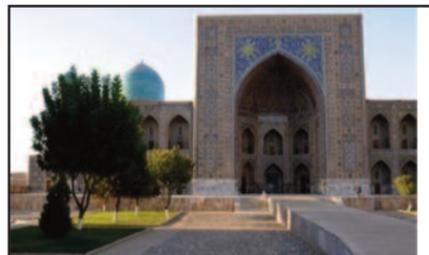
Visit the Silk Road with the Arts Society

Frederic Leighton and the Studio Houses of the Holland Park Circle

Lecturer: Daniel Robbins
Monday 13th September 7pm
In the second half of the nineteenth-century an extraordinary group of purpose-built studio houses were constructed on the edge of London's Holland Park. At their centre was the house built by Frederic Leighton from the mid-1860s. With its vast studio and exotic Arab Hall it provided an inspiration to other artists who commissioned houses of their own. This lecture will be presented on Zoom. Members will receive email joining instructions. Guests are welcome for £8 - please email ticaclark@hotmail.com for further details.

Study Day: An Armchair Visit to the Silk Road Lecturer: Jane Angelini
Saturday 2nd October 2-4pm
Our "armchair travel" talk looks at the loveliest historic cities of Central Asia and is based around several visits made by Jane

of the ancient Silk Roads, Bukhara, the 'Dome of Islam', was for centuries a centre of artists, poets, scientists and scholars. The Webinar link for this Study Day will be sent in advance to all participants. The Study Day is open to members (£15) and to guests (£18). Please contact Nancy Bettelley at nancybettelley@hotmail.co.uk for payment details. The Webinar link will be sent to your email address a few days before the Study Day.
www.theartsocietygreenwich.org.uk



The Proper Blokes Club

The proper blokes club is a men's mental health walk and talk support group that creates a non judgemental, positive environment for men to be themselves and to feel comfortable.

It's also about getting some exercise and enjoying a chat whilst getting together for a walk.

What the organisers have found is a walk in this group environment always leads to a positive outcome at the end of each walk. It might not be the solution to any issues they may have but its the start

Comedy

GREENWICH COMEDY FESTIVAL RETURNS FOR AN OPEN-AIR SPECTACULAR!

15-19th September, National Maritime Museum
Catch this stupendous series of open-air shows featuring stand-up master **Dara Ó Briain**, the riotous **Tom Allen**, multi-award winning **Sara Pascoe**, QI's **Alan Davies**, Netflix star **Mae Martin**, Taskmaster's **Phil Wang**, The Mash Report's **Nish Kumar**, Off Menu host **Ed Gamble**, one-liner king **Milton Jones** plus **David O'Doherty**, **Reginald D Hunter**, **Ed Byrne**, **Lou Sanders**, **Tim Key**, **Joel Dommett**, **Shappi Khorsandi** and many (many) more.
<https://www.greenwichcomedyfestival.co.uk>

Poetry

In-words Poetry Zoom Dates

John Barnie, a poet, essayist and musician from Wales, is going to launch his latest collection, *Afterlives*, on Thursday 23rd September. He will also read some of his previously published poetry and hopefully make some music, too. This will be a collaboration with John's publishers, Cinnamon Press, an independent publishing house run by Jan Fortune and Adam Craig. Jan will co-host the event. Further into autumn, on 25th November, we will be able to hear the wonderful words and voices of Maggie Butt, Isabel Bermudez, David Cooke and Dino Mahoney. For more details visit: www.in-words.co.uk

Auditions!

AUDITIONS FOR 'MAMMA MIA' SUNDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 5PM

The Assembly Rooms, The Village, Charlton SE7.
They are looking for:
Three older ladies to act and sing
Three older men to act and sing
Dancers/singers 18 and over
Three younger ladies to act and sing
Three younger men to act and sing
Plus they also need to cover a few minor parts as well.
Candidates can sing an Abba song featured in the script and will be accompanied by our Musical Director.

....continued from previous column of a positive new step in their life.

There are currently walks going on in Blackheath from Mycenae House, Southwark, Greenwich, Woolwich, Wallington and now Catford. These walks are all free to attend for any bloke in need. Contact on <https://theproperblokesclub.co.uk/> on Facebook or call Scott on 07397 501110

Music

The Council's landmark cultural hub **Woolwich Works** soon to open
Woolwich Works is a new landmark cultural hub for London, based on the Thames in the Royal Arsenal will be home to a number of world class resident artistic companies. Such as the immersive theatre company Punchdrunk, Chineke! Orchestra, the National Youth Jazz Orchestra and Luca Silvestrini's Prorein.

The ambitious council-led development is due to open on 23rd September this year. Check out their website for a full list of upcoming performances: www.woolwich.works

Blackheath Halls Opera Presents Venus & Adonis

Blackheath Halls Opera is thrilled to present this exciting production of *Venus and Adonis*. Socially distanced performances run throughout September and into October.

<https://www.blackheathhalls.com/whats-on/blackheath-halls-opera-2021-venus-adonis>

Mycenae House events

Mississippi MacDonald and Band Support from Son Jack, Jr.

24th September 2021
The three times British Blues Awards nominee returns to Mycenae after an unbelievable three year gap with a great new album, new record deal and slick new touring show.

<https://mycenaehouse.co.uk/>

Music for an Autumnal Evening!

Gwen Zammit BEM is putting on a concert in the Old Library at Charlton House at 7pm on Sunday, 10th October, in aid of the repairs to the roof of the House. The tickets are £15 to include a glass of wine or fruit juice.

The programme consists of instrumental and vocal music performed by professional and amateur musicians. It contains music to suit all tastes from classical, jazz and musical comedy, and more. It will be a 'relaxed, enjoy yourself' evening.

Tickets can be obtained by telephoning 020 8856 7373 and payments can be made by bank transfer or cheque - details given when booking.

Greenwich and Docklands International Festival

27th August-11th September.
Feast your eyes with this well-loved South East London outdoor spectacular, as festival organisers mark our emergence from the pandemic.
<https://festival.org/gdif/whatson/>

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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

Friends of Mycenae Gardens

Dear Friends, Neighbours and users of Mycenae Gardens,

I enclose notice of the next and much-delayed Annual General Meeting to be held in Mycenae House (or perhaps in the Gardens) at 2pm on Friday 3 September 2021. This will be the first General Meeting since March 2019, and is particularly important.

This meeting is so important because, as I explained in my last email, much work is needed in the Gardens. It is up to the Friends group to identify, prioritise and carry out that work, but at the moment it is not up to the job. Although membership has held up, active participation in the work of the group has been falling in recent years and the management (the committee) has been hollowed out by the loss of younger members and the ageing of the rest. 2020 was supposed to be a year of revival and reinvigoration of the group with a younger chair, fresh ideas and a new programme. That all fell through, partly as a result of covid. It is now needed more than ever.

If you value the Gardens, if you want to ensure their survival as a public open space and wildlife haven, you need to 'lean in'. I know from conversations with many of you that there is plenty of good will, but we need more. Please come to the meeting and bring whoever else you can find who values the Gardens. Non-members are welcome and they can sign up (free) at the AGM. We need your participation as members, but we also need a new committee: the group cannot function without a minimum of six committee members. The present committee is already under-strength, and after two missed AGMs all the elected members will have to retire by rotation. So please come to take part, to contribute your

ideas, and to put yourselves or others forward as committee members. Ultimately, if too few come to the meetings, or if too few step up to the committee, the group will have to be dissolved, with the loss of the main mechanism by which the voices of the community can be heard, their needs reconciled and their efforts deployed. But if enough join in and step up, the Gardens can be restored managed and improved by the community, for the benefit of all.

Best wishes,
Mark Barnes
Chair, Secretary of the Friends

Notice of an Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Mycenae Gardens to be held on Friday 3rd September 2021 at 2pm in Mycenae House (or perhaps in the Gardens).

All members are invited (and urged) to attend if possible. Membership of the group is free, and non-members are welcome to attend and join at the event.

The business of the meeting will include:

1. The election of new members of the committee. New members are urgently needed. A member of the group willing to serve on the committee can be proposed by two other members of the group (even on the day).

2. A proposed amendment of the first sentence of paragraph 7 of the constitution to read "The Secretary shall call an Annual General Meeting ('AGM') of the General Members to be held in each calendar year, on such date as the committee may determine." (Explanation: Paragraph 7 currently requires the AGM to be held in the first three months of each year, when the weather tends to discourage attendance. This amendment will allow the meeting to be held on the date that best suits the membership and fits the group's activities.)

Mark Barnes, Chair and Secretary
Friends of Mycenae Gardens



The Friends of Mycenae Gardens commissioned (with the financial support of Mycenae House and The Greenwich Steiner School) a unique sculpture made from the tree stump remains of the Cherry Tree which grew in the centre of the Gardens.

Les Langley an experienced and well known carver spent the day in the gardens carving various animals into the tree trunk using a chainsaw. The sculpture is available to be viewed at anytime and has quickly become a popular talking point, particularly with young children, who love to spot the animals hidden within the tree.

Greenwich Builds

Hoardings on a number of sites announce that they are part of the Greenwich Builds programme. This initiative was a response to the lack of affordable housing in the area and the council launched the programme pledging to build 750 new homes to be let to Greenwich residents at "genuinely affordable rents". Both the Greenwich Planning Alliance and the London Forum are broadly in favour of such council-led schemes.

Locally, work has already begun for 417 new homes on the Kidbrooke site. Other sites in the area include The Triangle, (off Commerell Place), and Sam Manners House (off Woodland Grove).

There have been some local concerns about the Kidbrooke scheme with residents claiming that trees have been unnecessarily felled without permission. There are also fears that the local infrastructure is inadequate with no additional trains planned for Kidbrooke station.

It was recently announced that a further three new zero carbon council home devel-

opment sites have been approved. The council claim that, "like all Greenwich Builds homes, they are both environmentally friendly and cheap to run, helping the council meet the sustainability targets set out in its draft Carbon Neutral Plan."

Funded in the first place by the Mayor of London, Right to Buy receipts and loans, the costs should, over time, be recouped from rental income.

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Take Away or Sit Down? Rules & Regs

Maggie Gravelle

Google 'Dallas Chicken' and you will be directed to a site telling you that the outlet at 2 Stratheden Parade is temporarily closed. The 'eatible' website (<https://www.eatable.co.uk/>) also lists Dallas Chicken at this address which used to be the Standard Supermarket.

Locals were not at first concerned since they argued that such a proposal could be fought off at the planning stage. At least three businesses on the Parade and ten residents who live close by as well as the High School on Vanbrugh Park, are opposed to a fast food chain on their doorstep.

In 2010 Thresher, which occupied the property, applied for a change of use from retail to a fast food outlet. This was turned down by the council and the appeal dismissed on the grounds that it would "prejudice the range of shops available to the local community and would harm unacceptably the vitality and viability of the Blackheath Royal Standard local shopping centre."

As we reported in March WN, planning law has recently changed. It is no longer necessary to obtain planning permission for a change of use from retail to a café or restaurant. However, takeaways are not

included, so Dallas Chicken would still need to apply to the council. Despite the evidence that Dallas Chicken is a brand which advertises through its appeal as a fast food takeaway, it is claiming that the shop at Stratheden Parade would be a restaurant. This would require that they sell food for consumption on the premises (<https://www.planningportal.co.uk>). They are therefore, according to locals, planning to install some tables and give public access to the staff toilet. The council's hands appear to be tied until they have evidence that the business is largely for take-away.

Local campaigner, Daniel, suggests that there may be a further opportunity to challenge the plans. Environmental Health requires kitchen ventilation to reach certain standards and this would need the installation of the correct flue. Dallas Chicken were at first, according to Daniel, resistant to installing this extraction system but eventually relented and are now intending to do so. Crucially for the campaigners this will require planning permission, at which stage residents will be able to object.

Daniel Hoffmann-Gill can be contacted via email at danielhg@gmail.com

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

46 WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 21/2608/HD

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FLAT 5, 61 WESTCOMBE PARK ROAD ref 21/2770/F

To replace 6 single glazed wooden windows with uPVC double glazing.

61 BEACONSFIELD ROAD ref 21/2891/F

To construct single storey rear extension to garage and convert garage into habitable room.

170 HUMBER ROAD ref 21/2632/HD

To construct single storey rear extension.

TREE WORKS

7 CHARLTON ROAD ref 21/3035/TC

To fell mimosa

The London Marathon Returns continued from page 3...

ROAD REOPENING TIMES

Roads will reopen as soon as it is safe to do so. Roads to the south of Westcombe Park are anticipated to reopen by 13:00 while roads to the north of Westcombe Park are anticipated to reopen by 15:00

ACCESS FOR RESIDENTS

During the road closure times, Vehicle Crossing Points will enable vehicles into and out of the affected area. Vehicles will be facilitated across the event route by stewards at the following locations and at the times indicated:

07:00-08:50 AND FROM 13:00
• Vanbrugh Hill to Blackwall Lane FROM 13:00

• Maze Hill to Shooters Hill Road west-bound (only) towards Deptford and Lewisham.

Please note that between 08:45 and 11:30 Vehicle Crossing Points will not operate while the runners will be using the full width of the road.

-Maggie Gravelle

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