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November 2025 No 9

"Autumn carries more gold in its pocket than all the other seasons." Jim Bishop

Ambitious £77m renovation.

This redevelopment of the Royal Observatory Greenwich will reaffirm the Observatory as the UK's centre for the public understanding of time and space. The project will deliver an ambitious schedule of much-needed repairs to the site's unique built heritage, vital capital improvements plus a new programme of activities as part of 3year renovation.

where visitors will meet Royal Observatory astronomers and participate in science events and experi-

Paddy Rodgers, Director of Royal Museums Greenwich said: 'Founded years ago, the Royal Observatory Greenwich is Britain's oldest purpose-built scientific institution. It is the birthplace of modern astronomy and the home of the





Award-winning Jamie Fobert Architects are leading the project. Works include a brand-new entrance pavilion; landscaped paths linking new astronomy galleries including four new interactive astronomy galleries examining the mysteries of the Universe; a lift and stairs that, for the first time, ensures step-free access to the iconic Victorian Great Equatorial Telescope and a live science space - Astronomers' Court -

Prime Meridian and Greenwich Mean Time. Through this project we aim to inspire new audiences and advance our remit as a place for the public understanding of astronomy as decreed by our Royal Warrant. The Royal Observatory has long been a place of curiosity, meticulous observation, and creative thinking. This encapsulates the spirit of this project.'

Work is due to be completed in Spring 2028. The Prime Meridian line, Meridian Observatory and historic Flamsteed House galleries remain open to visitors until spring 2027. Royal Museums Greenwich has released a selection of photos to look back on how the Observatory has evolved over the years and as it embarks on arguably it's biggest renovation yet. Polly Morgan Will you help preserve heritage this

autumn?

The Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, depends on public support to preserve its historic buildings and artworks. Your donation helps protect this World Heritage Site for future generations. If you can give today, your support will make a real difference. If you're able to donate £300 or more, the Old Royal Naval College would love to thank you in person at a special event in these magnificent surround-

https://ornc.org/support-us/helppreserve-heritage-appeal

Council's proposed LTN decision questioned.

team at Greenwich Council informing them of the intention to make the West and East Greenwich management neighbourhood scheme, better known as the LTN, permanent. There would be a few changes to the location of the ANPR filters in West Greenwich (on Royal Hill and Blisset Street), and Blue Badge holders would be able to register two vehicles for exemption. The current hours of operation would remain.

The recommendation has been challenged by Conservative, Independent and Green Councillors which means there will be a hearing at Woolwich Town Hall, probably on November 6th. Although some question whether the data justify retaining an LTN that 80% of residents opposed in the first place, another question is why is the decision being made now? The LTN went into operation in November last year for up to 18 months. Many would prefer monitoring to continue for the full period before a final decision is made.

The introduction of the scheme was part of the council's climate change strategy explaining that "A shift

 ${f R}$ esidents have recently received away from car travel to walking, a letter from the Transport cycling and public transport is essential to making the borough carbon neutral Unfortunately the figures given in summaries such as the letter to residents are misleading. emphasise the positive effects but gloss over the negative. **Traffic flows**

The letter tells us that traffic has reduced by 66% in West Greenwich (WG), 52% in East Greenwich (EG) and 15% in Charlton (C) when the filters are in operation, and has also declined by 30% (WG) and 20% (EG) when the filters are not operating. However, these figures don't show displaced traffic or the smaller changes in the afternoon.

The 15% decrease for Charlton is also morning peak only and appears to include Banning Street and the Old Dover Road which are arguably not in Charlton. When the afternoon peak is included, the decrease in traffic is about 7% and if Banning Street and the Old Dover Road are removed, the reduction is only about 1% when the filters are in Continued on Page 5 operation.

Stop Press

We have learnt that police officers attached to the areas around the Park will be based in the offices by the Blackheath Gate. They will be drawn from four neighbourhood teams: Greenwich Park; Greenwich Creekside; East Greenwich and Greenwich Peninsula. These are not police dedicated to the Park, but they will maintain a visible presence and the arrangement is due to start within weeks. This follows the removal of the dedicated Greenwich Park officers some months ago.







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Westcombe News

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Taking Time For Macmillan

Once again Westcombe Parkers have put their hearts and their money where it matters for one of our community's favourite charities, Macmillan Cancer Support.

The annual Macmillan Coffee Morning, organised by Westcombe Society at Mycenae House, was attended with as much joy as ever. Homemade sandwiches



and a mouth-watering assortment of cakes and biscuits, all baked and prepared by locals, were washed down with piping hot coffee and tea. Greenwich Mayor, Councillor Linda Bird, was guest of honour, and she delighted everyone with her warmth and friendly chat. A raffle, with lots of goodies won, rounded off a truly uplifting event.



Hearty thanks as ever to the hardworking staff at Mycenae House for their help.

Best of all, the grand total of funds raised for Macmillan Cancer this year, taking in the walk and the coffee morning, was £1,356.27. A solid token of our support.

Diane Blackwell

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REMINDER -Members' Standing **Orders**

Please check your annual member's standing order membership increased from May 2024. The 2026 payment due should show:

Family/Household £15.00 Individual £12.00 Concession £6.00 Many thanks for your help Membership Secretary

Taking a Westcombe Walk

Thank you, Neil Rhind MBE, for loving your patch of London – Blackheath, Westcombe Park and Greenwich – so passionately for more than half a century. Neil died in February 2024 but left us lucky locals a wealth of historical detail in books and walks.

Walking Westcombe, the third in Neil's series of local walking guides, brings the past vividly to life, and having lived in the area for 28 years I was keen to follow in this prolific historian's footsteps.

I started with a short walk that takes in Vanbrugh Terrace, St John's Park West and Stratheden Road, a route I thought I knew well. Starting at the south end of Vanbrugh Terrace I pass the eight grand three-story houses built in 1851-52 which dominate the landscape so spectacularly. Leases to live in them were, back then, issued by that other famous local, John Angerstein. At the north end we turn right into St John's Park and walk towards St John's Church with its soaring steeple.

A little way in, a charming early Victorian letterbox set in a garden wall peeks out from under foliage on the corner of Angerstein Lane. The houses in St John's Park are suitably grand for the solicitors, doctors, sports heroes, an East India Merchant, a colonial produce broker, various other successful business people, and a majorgeneral, who lived there. A wisp of notoriety too with a criminal captured in a back garden in 1878 and hanged the next year.



At St John's Church the walk turns right down Stratheden Road and Neil draws our attention to more lovely big houses I'd previously given just a cursory glance. One of them was once occupied by several soldiers important enough to make the pages of Who's Who. Another was once named Waratah Lodge because its first tenant was an Australian wine merchant. In the 1920s and 1930s number 18 was a Dr Barnado's babies' home. The De la Mare Court flats are on the site of what was once a bowling green, then garden, then a a bursary garage/petrol station.

An optional extra on this walk is to turn left into the unmade track called Heathway, a fascinating secluded mix of modern and coach house conversions.

Thanks to this first route from Walking Westcombe, I already feel closer to the area I love and call home. Diane Blackwel

The book (an ideal Xmas gift) is available at The Blackheath Bookshop and The Bookshop on the Heath. The book can be reserved for collection by emailing info@westcombesociety.org.

Mind Your Qs & As

You don't have to be a whiz at a quiz to have fun at the November 22nd Westcombe Society quiz at Mycenae House. Novices are welcome to turn up at 7.00 for a 7.30 start to tackle the latest batch brain-straining questions concocted by our merciless quizmasters Robbie, Peter and Patrick. Google, however, is not invited to help answer the silly, funny, obscure, challenging questions. And beware of the surprise easy question - it can throw the most activated brain.

There are 10 tables, with a team of 6 at each, £14 per person for a fish and chips nosh at half time, and a raffle with proceeds going to our Charity of the Year.

And Walking Westcombe, with its fascinating local walks by the late great Neil Rhind, will be on sale at the quiz for £12.

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The evening's entry fee is £8 for Westcombe Society members, £9 for non-members.

Easiest question of the night: will we have a good time?

Answer: definitely.

To book, please email Gavin at gavin.wsevents@gmail.com

Diane Blackwell





NEIGHBOURHOOD

Meet The Current Mayor of the Royal Borough Of Greenwich

2025/2026 **CLLR LINDA BIRD**

Tam truly honoured to be the Leurrent Mayor and first citizen of our Royal Borough. It is an even greater personal privilege, as this is my second term in office as your Mayor.

My previous year was from 2019 -2020. You may recall this was a significantly challenging and difficult time for everyone as we all faced the threats posed by the COVID virus and thus a global pandemic.

Although it is important to acknowledge those very dark times, and we can never forget the impact this time of isolation has had, particularly on our young people, there was a sense of community and some positive actions around our Borough as people tried to support each other.

As Mayor during this time, I experienced a unique term of office which brought me closer to many of our residents, and which brought out a true sense of community spirit. I absolutely felt I made a difference, as I connected with residents on zoom. I managed to make around 950 zoom calls over the year.

The Mayor is the Civic Leader of the Borough and also its First That is a Citizen. huge responsibility, as well as being a fantastic opportunity to serve the community I love. As I reflect on a life which began in a post-war prefab in Kingston upon Hull, I am filled with a sense of pride at this achievement.

I have spent my professional life in all aspects of education, mostly in Greenwich. My two daughters and four grandsons have all been born here and educated in Greenwich schools. We are a Greenwich team. My two daughters, Emily and Amy, are working alongside me as the Mayor's consorts. So, you may see

all three Birds together.

During this year I am keen to visit as many schools and community groups as I possibly can, so please contact the Mayor's office on mayor@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or call 020 8921 5023/6012 to book a

Also, this year I am fundraising for two local charities:

Home-Start Greenwich - which provides amazing wraparound care and provision for families, carers and babies during the first 100 days of a child's life.

The Dementia Support initiative which has recently been established at our Community Hospice. Most of our families will be affected by dementia and living with this cruel condition. The Hospice is aiming to provide support for the best possible quality of life through shared activities and events.

If you would like to donate to the Mayor's two charities, there is a Just Giving page

www.justgiving.com/mrgaf. Or you can always contact the Mayor's office. Thank you in advance.

I hope to meet as many of you as possible during the next few months. Meanwhile, I share with you my belief that Greenwich is a great place to live, work and play.

Best wishes from your Mayor Cllr Linda Bird



The Dream is coming True!

In previous issues of the Westcombe News, we have recounted the highs and lows of the dream that one day our community centre at Mycenae House would have a lift. Now approval has finally been given by Greenwich Council's Planning Department of a revised plan. For 16 years the Vanbrugh Community Association which runs Mycenae House has been seeking permission to have a lift installed to make all 4 floors accessible. A Stannah stair lift was installed in January 2023 as a short-term measure whilst the administrative complexities were addressed.



A previous planning application was refused earlier this year on several grounds, including the position of the proposed lift on the eastern wall

of Mycenae House, its size and dominance, and harm to the setting of the adjacent Grade II* Listed Building. Overall, it was considered that the proposal failed to respect the character and appearance of the Westcombe Park Conservation

In the revised application, the external lift has been set further back, away from the frontage, and the width and depth have been reduced so as to make the lift subordinate to the host building. The previously proposed zinc cladding has been substituted with brickwork which is to be in Flemish bond with recessed, decorative herringbone brick panels, creating a sympathetic style.

Much thought and effort was given in developing the revised proposal, both from the VCA and the Council's planners and Conservation Officer, and a number of options were explored to try to find a solution that would be considered acceptable at this location with its high visibility and adjacent heritage asset. The 'public benefit' of Mycenae House as a vibrant community hub was also acknowledged by the Council in coming to its deci-

The building work will start next year. There will be a 1-metre test panel of the new brickwork to ensure that the colour, profile and pointing are correct.

Many thanks to all involved in bringing this to fruition. Ann Hill











3 Westcombe News November 2025

FEATURES

nyone using the trains recently A_{may}^{nyon} have glimpsed a Networker train that has been restored to Network South East colours and named "Chris Green OBE", in tribute to the founder of Network South East as a business sector within British Rail back in 1986. Network South East changed how railways in south east England were run and operated, and it created an instantly recognisable brand, remains of which can still be seen today at some stations. It continued to operate until it was broken up by privatisation and the creation of private sector franchises.

This four car unit was restored as part of Rail 200, a celebration of the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton – Darlington line on 27 September 1825. In those 200 years, there have been many changes in the UK rail network, its operations, infrastructure and rolling stock. In this area, Maze Hill station was opened in 1873 as a branch line from Charlton. The direct link to London was not opened until 1878 and, a year later, Westcombe Park station was opened (then called Combe Farm Lane). Electric trains arrived in 1926; and "slam door" trains were removed from service in 1995, being replaced by the Networkers still in use today.

Networkers are nearing the end of their life, being over 30 years old, and they have started to be scrapped as they are taken out of use. That is why, on this line, we are now seeing

TROJAN

more of the Class 376 Electrostar trains but they are themselves over 20 years old, having been introduced in 2004. They are due to be refurbished, but so far the only refurbishment that has taken place is the painting of the outside Southeastern blue.

Southeastern have begun a procurement exercise for a new Metro fleet and it is exploring options with manufacturers and the leasing companies. The original aim had been to introduce new trains in 2027 but that is looking increasingly unlikely as an order is yet to be placed. Nevertheless, the procurement is to be welcomed as railways continue to evolve.

IN OTHER NEWS:

Closure of the line at Dartford. Replacement of track, conductor rails and crossings and a rebuilding of platforms at Dartford station will mean no trains will run between Dartford and Gravesend from 14th February to 22nd February 2026. The Rainham service through Maze Hill and Westcombe Park will terminate at Plumstead, but it has not been confirmed by GTR whether it will still run a half-hourly service as now or whether (as they are prone to do on Sundays) the service will be reduced to hourly. This is being pur-

Rainham service, is to be taken back into public ownership on 31 May 2026.

Mike Sparham

So Inspiring

First thing each morning, local resident Ruth Gribble does 10 minutes of her own yoga routine. Not a big deal you say, except that Ruth is 97 and also does a one-toone chair yoga session every week with Iyengar yoga teacher Cecilia Winter who, lucky for Ruth, lives just across the road.

Ruth, a former nurse who came to Westcombe Park in 1968, has been doing Iyengar yoga (which focuses on alignment) since the late 1980s. She attended classes at Mycenae House for many years, went on yoga retreats, and joined Cecilia's classes at her studio from 2018 to 2023. Since then, weekly 40-minute chair yoga sessions have been at Ruth's home.



This mum of three (one daughter is also an Iyengar teacher) and grandmother of six is wonderful proof that with intention and commitment, age doesn't have to stop you improving your mobility.

Ruth and Cecilia have a lovely

chemistry, and their time together focuses on Ruth's balance, strength, co-ordination and flexibility.

Sitting in a chair, Ruth pushes her rollator walker forwards and backwards, which she says feels really good and is giving her spine a fabulous stretch. Cecilia leans in to encourage Ruth to stretch even more.

Then, to the feet, to move all the joints and keep the ankles working well. Teacher and student have a giggle as they sit facing each other, stretch their legs out one at a time and push each other's feet. Great for strengthening leg muscles.

Ruth stands up for arm work. As well as bending and straightening her arms and holding the pose several times, she does shoulder rolls to lift the spine and stretch the back muscles. With amazing ease Ruth then does the Eagle Pose (Garudasana) where one arm wraps over the other. So many yoga students half Ruth's age and younger find this one challenging.

Back in a chair, Cecilia guides Ruth through some gentle twists before a wind down chat. Ruth recalls the excitement of being in the crowd at the late Queen Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953; walking in the Lake District, climbing in the Himalayas. What a woman!

Diane Blackwell

sued with the company. reenwich Housing Society held recounting the history of sea Gits annual garden party for res-GTR, which runs the Luton -

idents in September at Hatfield Court, on what turned out to be a lovely sunny afternoon despite the threat of showers.

Guests and residents alike were treated to a vintage-style afternoon tea with traditional scones and clotted cream, taking advantage of the fine weather to catch up with old and new neighbours in the sunshine. Steve Kerridge, GHS committee chair, welcomed fellow committee members to the event, along with local councillor for the Blackheath Westcombe ward, Christine St Matthew-Daniel.

Local musical group the Cutty Shanties provided the entertainment, shanties along with a singalong which everyone joined in with enthusiastically.

Garden Partv

Greenwich Housing Society has been providing homes for independent elderly with a connection to Greenwich since 1958 and is run on a primarily voluntary basis by a local management committee. If you are interested in supporting the work of the Society by joining its committee, please visit their website: www.greenwichhousingsociety.org.uk







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FEATURES

Continued from P1

The letter states that "motorised trips across the whole area (including boundary roads) has reduced by 6%" and that some boundary areas "have experienced slightly more traffic." The full Report, however, shows some marked increases in traffic, for example, an increase of over 50% on Blackheath Hill and Greenwich South Street when filters in local roads are operating. Traffic has also increased by 10% on Woolwich Road, morning and evening and in Charlton afternoon traffic has increased by 23% on parts of Victoria Way, by 17% on Eastcombe Avenue, and by 40% Marlborough Lane. The increase in traffic on the Woolwich Road is about 10%.

The Report acknowledges the negative effects of increased traffic in Charlton and along several boundary roads, but the amelioration measures appear small and piecemeal, such as changes to pedestrian crossings, restrictions on right turns, traffic calming, and speed restrictions.

Air Quality

The letter also misleads in stating that 54% (WG), 66% (EG), and 77% (C) of areas experienced decreasing levels of NO2 with an 11% (WG), 0% (EG) and 23% (C) increase in some locations whereas the report says that these changes are small and concludes that "in most cases, the impacts are negligible, particularly along local roads....the overall effect of the Scheme on air quality is judged to non-significant".

Walking, cycling and buses

The final two points in the letter say that 23% of survey respondents say they are walking and wheeling 'more' and 'much more' and that TfL has no concerns about bus journey time. However, the Report states that 11% of respondents say they are walking and wheeling less. The letter also doesn't say that some bus routes have significantly slower journey times. Not surprisingly these routes are on West Greenwich boundary roads suffering from increased traffic.

4221 people responded in some way to the consultation measures. The most negative sentiments towards the scheme were traffic congestion (51% of respondents) with road safety coming second. The most positive sentiment was towards walking (39% of respondents).

It will take time to analyse the data fully but an initial impression is that many changes, both positive and negative, have been small but that there has been a significant shift in traffic to boundary roads and roads in Charlton. We remain concerned about the effects of displaced traffic on roads outside the scheme and feel that mitigation measures need to be tried and tested before a final decision is made to make the scheme permanent.

Links to the full reports can be found on

www.westcombesociety.org where any updates will also be posted.

Letter



Georgian - detail - The Old Royal Naval College, The Military at Woolwich, The Marquis of Granby, The Rangers House, Revellers tumbling down in Greenwich Park

Greenwich Millennium EmbroideriesDear Editor,

Readers of Westcombe News may remember that, in the March issue this year, I wrote about the Greenwich Millennium Embroideries. I am very pleased to say that, as a result of the greater interest recently in the Embroideries, the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust has donated 12 copies of the book telling the story of the making of the

Singing for memory difficulties



ur group was created in Oresponse to a real need in the community, an opportunity for carers to relax and a joyful, inclusive space for people with a dementia diagnosis. But everyone welcome—we've had all ages join in, including a baby! Each session is filled with sing-alongs, percussion, dancing, action songs and music from all styles and eras. Music is a powerful way to connect and express emotion—especially when words are hard to find. Personally meaningful music unlocks memories and restores a sense of self, acting as a lifeline for those living with dementia.

The World Health Organisation recommends using music to reduce anxiety and depression.

We can also help you create a personal playlist—a powerful tool at home for example, use upbeat songs in the morning to help with routine or play calming favourites in the evening to wind down.

100% of group members said they'd recommend the sessions to a friend. Music transforms your day!

"I know my mother loved it and I was so pleased that she recognised several songs. It was delightful to see the dancing and playing of instruments!" – Caroline Johns, group member

We meet at Mycenae House, in Room 10, upstairs (no lift, but there is a stairlift) Nov 1st, 15th, 29th and Dec 13th. Cost is £10 per person for the 2 hours which includes 2 professional musicians and tea and biscuits. Contact Eleanor Meynell on 07939 265991 or

in fo@eleanor music services.com

Embroideries to Greenwich Libraries.

I know the books have now been catalogued and distributed to libraries. It is a beautiful book. It explains how Beverly Burford, then Manager of Plumstead Museum. thought up the project. Each panel is shown, with a key plan and index of every item on that panel. There are illustrations of the watercolour sketches that artist Sally Jenkinson produced to give each volunteer embroiderer something to work from as they started each embroidery task. There are biographies of everyone involved, including all the embroiderers. I think many of your readers would enjoy the book, and all that is required is a visit to any Greenwich Library and a request to borrow it. The full title of the book is Stitches in Time: The Making of the Greenwich Millennium Embroideries.

> Yours sincerely, Judy Smith MBE

Key Fraud Prevention Tips

Stay Alert: How to Guard Against Courier Fraud and Cyber Crime Local police are reminding the public to remain cautious as scammers are continuing to exploit people through courier fraud and online crime. These scams are designed to manipulate victims into parting with money, banking details, or valuable items. By taking a few straightforward precautions, you can greatly lower your chances of becoming a target.

Courier Fraud – Spot the Warning Signs

In many cases, fraudsters pose as police officers or bank staff, claiming your account is under threat. They may pressure you into withdrawing cash, handing over bank cards, or even giving up personal documents for 'evidence'. It's important to remember that no genuine bank or police officer will

ever send a courier to collect such items.

Follow the steps below to ensure you stay safe:

If you feel uncomfortable or pressured, end the call straight away.

Wait at least five minutes or use a separate line before contacting your bank or the police on their official number. For banks, this can be often found on the back of your debit/credit card or alternatively, on their website.

Never give cards, PINs, or cash to anyone who turns up at your door. Devices such as TrueCall are available to purchase and install, which filter scam calls to you or a relative's phone line.

Cyber Crime – Protect Your Digital World

Online scams can take many forms, from phishing emails to compromised social media accounts. Criminals rely on carelessness, but a few good habits can keep your information safe:

Create strong, different passwords for every account and turn on two-factor authentication where possible. A strong password consists of a mixture of lower case, capital letters, numbers and symbols.

Be careful when clicking any links or attachments on emails you think are suspicious. If in doubt, do not click or open any attachments or links.

Regularly update your phone, computer, and apps to install the latest security fixes.

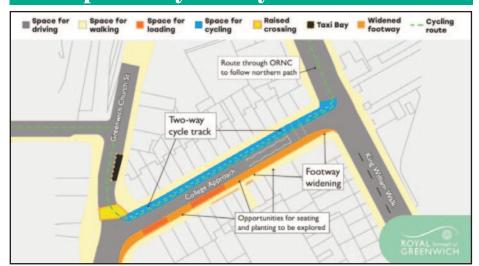
Key Message: If something feels suspicious, walk away or end the call. If you'd like to authenticate information, call the official number for that company or bank so you know you are talking to the legitimate party. Fraud can be reported to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040, and in an emergency always call 999. Scan the QR code to access 'The Little Guide' series from the Metropolitan Police.





ENVIRONMENT

Proposed cycleway in Greenwich



The Council recently approved plans for a two-way cycleway in the centre of Greenwich. The new plan is part of a wider strategy to provide safe and attractive travel options for all, particularly those who walk, cycle or use public transport.

This cycleway would be on the north side of College Approach and is intended to complete Cycleway 4 locally. Cyclists travelling east would be directed to use the path through the Old Naval College. Those travelling west would be directed towards Greenwich Church Street.

Following a public consultation 57% of respondents were postive but 28% were against the plan. Residents on the Meridian estate were critical of the proposal which would see the destruction of a children's playground to be replaced by a new, larger one to the north.

These measures are intended to be temporary until the redesign and refurbishment of Greenwich town centre is agreed. The consultation report shows that the majority of respondents (52%) rated the walking environment in Greenwich town centre as poor, indicating significant dissatisfaction with the current infrastructure. The feedback underscores the importance of addressing the issues faced by pedestrians in Greenwich Town Centre to create a more pleasant and safe walking experience.

Maggie Gravelle







To tidy or not to tidy...?

As the vibrant hues of summer fade and the mellow fruitfulness of autumn arrives, many gardeners face the age-old question: should we tidy the garden now, or let nature take its course?

Traditionally, autumn was seen as the time to cut everything back, clear the beds and prepare the garden for winter. Indeed, there's a certain satisfaction in neat borders, turned soil and emptied pots. Tidying in autumn can help reduce overwintering pests and diseases, particularly in vegetable plots.

But nowadays, we are encouraged to embrace a more wildlife-friendly approach by not tidying too much. Excessive tidying can be detrimental to biodiversity and soil health. When biodiversity is low, a garden lacks the natural checks and balances. This can weaken plant resilience and lead to increased vulnerability to disease and pest infestations.

Leaving seed heads, dead stems and piles of leaves can provide vital habitat for invertebrates and birds. Hollow stems offer shelter for overwintering bees and ladybirds, so cutting stems to the ground can disturb hibernating creatures or leave them exposed to predators. Seed heads, like those on teasels or echinacea, are favourites for goldfinches: dead-heading removes this critical resource.

Fallen leaves gradually break down, enriching the soil with essential nitrogen and phosphorus, and acting as a natural mulch and blanket that protects the roots of perennials from temperature fluctuations. Leaf litter also provides organic matter that benefits earthworms and other soil organisms, and shields the soil from winter rain, reducing the risk of erosion and compaction. Insects that thrive in leaf piles provide a valuable source of food for birds.

Of course, some balance is needed. Clearing away diseased material, removing invasive plants and ensuring paths remain clear and safe is sensible. So, should we tidy the garden in autumn? If you are aiming for a perfectly neat garden, go ahead and tidy. But if you are happy to let nature lend a hand and support local wildlife, leaving a bit of a mess can be a wise move.

Ann Hill

Woodlands Heights: Here we go again

After having their application to construct an additional storey of flats on the large Woodlands Heights building on Vanbrugh Hill rejected three times in recent years, the developers have returned with a fourth scheme. In the view of those most affected – the leaseholders in the building itself, the residents of Lasseter Place who are overshadowed and other residents living nearby – this latest design is very similar to the previous ones, and where it is different it is even worse.





Around 100 objections have been submitted to the Council planning department, and an action group representing Woodland Heights and Lasseter Place residents is preparing to argue their case against the application when, at a date which is still undecided, it comes before the planning committee. *Clive Corlett*

PLANNING APPLICATIONS*

www.westcombesociety.org

14-15 STRATHEDEN PARADE ref 25/3213/F

To install new shop front and create two one-bed units to the rear ground floor, and side infill extensions (resubmission).

62 HARDY ROAD ref 25/3126/HD To demolish outbuilding and construct part one/part two storey side/rear infill extensions.
64 BEACONSFIELD ROAD ref 25/2806/HD

To construct single storey rear/side extension, extend annex, and install carport to the front.

PAVEMENT OUTSIDE LIBRARY, OLD DOVER ROAD ref 25/3089/F To install BT Street Hub and remove existing payphone. BROADBRIDGE HALL, BROADBRIDGE CLOSE ref 25/3031/F To replace existing building with three two-bed apartments and construct single storey rear extension and rear dormers.

TREE WORKS
73 MYCENAE ROAD
ref 25/3386/TC

To fell conifer in front garden.

* Please be advised that the planning applications noted here are based on information available at the time of print. For the latest updates, please visit our website www.westcombesociety.org

PAINTING & DECORATING

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Free no obligation quote
and advice given

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WHAT'S ON

Woodlands Farm



An evening with Santa 10th and 11th December

Sessions between 4pm and 6pm. Come and join our magical festive evening at Woodlands Farm. Start off in our Education Centre with a festive story before making some reindeer food in preparation for Christmas Eve. Then walk through our illuminated garden to meet Father Christmas and his elves where you will receive a present to take home and have an opportunity to take pictures. Booking is essential, £12 per child. There will also be a pop up café available each evening serving hot chocolate, tea and coffee.

To book visit www.thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org For more information contact admin@thewoodlandsfarmtrust.org or 020 8319 8900

Cutty Sark

Sea Shanty Festival 2025

Cutty Sark hosts its fifth Sea Shanty Festival. In celebration of Cutty Sark's 156th birthday, shanty bands from across the UK unite in singing traditional maritime working songs on board the iconic tea clipper. Visitors will be able to participate in a unique live singing event and enjoy a day of sea shanties onboard the world-famous Cutty Sark.

Date: 22 November 2025 Time: 10.00 - 16.30 Age: Suitable for all ages Location: Cutty Sark, Dry Berth Admission: Free with admission to the

www.rmg.co.uk/whats-on/ $cutty\hbox{-}sark/sea-shanty\hbox{-}festival\hbox{-}2025$

Highlights Tour

Explore Cutty Sark on a guided tour and discover what made it the fastest sailing ship in the world. Learn about the famous clipper races that brought tea to Britain, as well as how and why Cutty Sark was

preserved for the nation.

Dates: Daily Time: 12.00, 14.00

Age: Suitable for ages 7 and over

Location: Cutty Sark

Admission: Adult £5 | Student £3.50 | Child £2.50 | Members free

St Paul's Sinfonia

talented local orchestra performs From Woodlands to Sea Tchaikovsky Symphony no. 4.

Friday 21st November

St. Margaret's Church, Blackheath,

To buy tickets £20 full price or £15 concessions or find out more visit: www.stpaulssinfonia.com/

Harmony Sinfonia

Presents 'Story Time'. Saturday 29th Nov 6pm finish 8pm. We'll be playing Sleeping Beauty by Tchaikovsky,

Lieutenant Kijé by Prokofiev, and Scheherazade by Rimsky-Korsakov. Tickets are on sale at harmonysinfonia.co.uk or on the door. Under 18s are free. There'll be refreshments at the interval.

Blackheath Halls

Sat 1 11am & 3pm - Hickory Dickory Dock

Sun 2 2.30pm - Mark Thompson's Spectacular Science Show

Mon 3 1.10pm – Lunchtime Recital | Shirley Turner, Peter Mallison & Richard Pearce

Thu 6 7.30pm - Peter Stothard: Horace Poet on a Volcano

Fri 7 7.30pm - Dave Sutherland Sat 8 Nov 1.30pm & 4pm - The Smeds and the Smoos /

Sat 8 Nov 7.30pm – Ashley Campbell: Goodnight Nashville Tour

Sun 9 Nov 11am & 2pm - The Smeds and the Smoos

Wed 12 - Sat 15 10am - The London International Festival of Early Music Sun 16 10.30am - Blackheath Christmas Fair

Mon 17 1.10PM – Lunchtime Recital | Sara Trickey & Daniel Tong Thu 20 7.30 - David Farr in Conversation

Sat 22 2pm - Beatrice the Amazing Astronaut

Sat 22 8pm - Mark Watson: Before It Overtakes Us

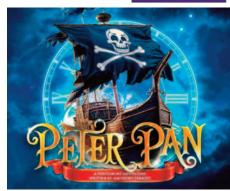
Sun 23 4.30pm - Family Concert: Stravinsky Firebird Sun 23 7pm – Blackheath Halls Orchestra Stravinsky Firebird & Ruth

Gipps Symphony No.2 www.blackheathhalls.com/whats-on

Poetry Reading

Tuesday November 11 at West Greenwich Library (7 for 7.30). Given the date, the reading is entitled 'Poems of Peace (and War)'. I asked the wonderful local group Nevada Street Poets to bring not only their own poems but a number of poems from the canon. Mick Delap, Graham High, Lorraine Mariner, Jocelyn Page and Sarah Westcott will read, including poems by Kelley Swain, a group member now living in Tasmania (recently in the Guardian's Poem of the Week).

CDEENIMICH



28th Nov 2025 - 11th Jan 2026 Peter Pan: A Pantomime Adventure Fly away to Neverland and Hook your tickets now for this years swashbuckling, family adventure For further details and to book call 020 8858 7755 or email Boxoffice@Greenwichtheatre.org.uk

National Maritime Museum

BEING HUMAN FESTIVAL

Mapping Yourself This workshop led by researcher Ema Sala will give participants the opportunity to take creative inspiration from the remarkable life of Henry Peglar, a sailor in the doomed Franklin expedition (1845-1849). Peglar left behind a wallet of mysterious writings, among these, a list of his jobs on ships shaped like a square maze.

Date: 8 November 2025 Time: 10.00 - 12.00

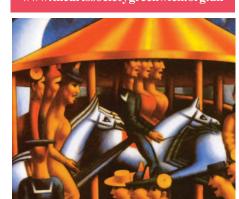
Age: Suitable for ages 16 and above Location: National Maritime Museum, Seminar Room

Admission: Free

https://tickets.rmg.co.uk/webstore/shop/ viewitems.aspx?cg=rmg&c=rmgbhf

The Arts Society Greenwich

www.theartssocietygreenwich.org.uk



The War to end all Wars: the Art of World War I Monday 10 November at 7.30 pm

Lecturer: Frank Woodgate Venue: James Wolfe Primary School, Royal Hill, Greenwich Guests very welcome: £10; membership £65 for 10 lectures The horrors of the First World War had a profound effect on the artists who fought in it, and they produced powerful images of the war and its aftermath. In the 1920s, many artists on the allied side returned to traditional subjects such as tranquil landscapes, while German artists produced powerful polemics against post-war deprivation, the treatment of war wounded and rising militarism. This lecture examines the art of both sides before, during and after the war which was expected 'to be over by Christmas'.

Frank Woodgate - Lecturer and Guide at Tate Britain and Tate Modern, for the Art Fund, the National Trust, U3A and other organisations, including on Zoom. Lectured for Dulwich Picture Gallery, Pallant House Gallery, Chichester and on cruises on behalf of Tate. Previously script-writer for The Living Paintings Trust (art for the visually-impaired).

www.theartssocietygreenwich.org.uk

Sitopia Farm

Saturday 15th November. Natural Dried Flowers. 10am-12pm.

Curious about how to dry and arrange your own bouquets?

Further courses/workshops covering everlasting wreath making in December Sunday 30th November: Pop up shop and Christmas Fair!

Throughout November- organic veg bag subscription scheme.

Winter Team Days/Alternative **Christmas Celebrations** Check out our website https://sitopiafarm.com/

Old Royal Naval College

Film tour: Spies, Sleuths and **Superheroes**

Fri & Sun | 11.30am & 1.30pm Tickets: £25 (Adults),

£19 (Concessions), £10 (Children) Visitor Centre, Old Royal Naval College, King William Walk, Greenwich, London, SE10 9NN Ever wondered where Operation Mincemeat was filmed in London? Or which iconic backdrops from Sherlock Holmes were shot here? Recognised as the UK's no.1 heritage film location, our historic site has been at the heart of British

filmmaking for over 100 years. ornc.org/whats-on/film-tour-spies/

Exhibition Cornwallis Cloth | Exhibition in the

Visitor Centre Open Daily | 10am-5pm

Tickets: £3 or included in the Painted Hall general admission Visitor Centre, Old Royal Naval College, King William Walk, Greenwich, London, SE10 9NN Cornwallis Cloth is a brand-new film created and produced by Sweet Patootee Arts as part of the IWM 14-18 NOW Legacy Fund. Inspired by oral testimony and the untold stories of British Caribbean lives during the Second World War. The film installation will be presented alongside an exhibition at the Old Royal Naval College exploring the wider themes of the film, and the rich historical significance of uncovering the stories of the past.

Tickets can be booked as part of a Painted Hall ticket or walk-ups welcome for Discover Greenwich tickets available from the Visitor Centre.

ornc.org/whats-on/cornwalliscloth-exhibition-in-the-visitor-centre/

Queen's House

Santa's Grotto

The Queens House Orangery will be transformed to create a world of enchantment and wonder, to tell the story of The Nutcracker. The performance is set on Christmas Eve and follows a young girl, Clara, who receives a Nutcracker doll as a present. There are live interactive performances and even a chance to meet Santa.

Dates: 22, 23, 28, 29, 30 November -24 December 2025

Time: 10.00 - 17.45 | The experience lasts 45 minutes and includes two 15-minute shows and a visit with Father Christmas

Age: Suitable for families with children aged 1-9

Location: Queen's House, Orangery Admission: Adult £27 | Child £27 including a gift | Under 1s go free without a gift.

www.rmg.co.uk/queens-house/ attractions/santas-grotto-queens-house

Queen's House Ice Rink

This winter, step onto the ice at the Queen's House Ice Rink. Located at the heart of the stunning Greenwich UNESCO World Heritage Site. Enjoy comfort and flexibility with VIP fast-track tickets, a 'skate-off pit lane' for mid-session breaks, and a viewing area next to Zero Degrees restaurant, serving up warming favourites.

Dates: 21 November – 4 January Time: 10.00 – 21.00

Age: Suitable ages 3 and over Location: Queen's House, North

Admission: Prices starting from -Adult £17.10 | Child £14.85 | Concession £15.20 www.rmg.co.uk/queens-house/ attractions/queens-house-ice-rink

Westcombe News November 2025

MARKET PLACE

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(When you show your Westcombe Society membership card)

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