



Coulsdon West Residents' Association

Newsletter Summer 2021



Three badgers in the back garden. Photo: Brian Quattrucci,
See the wildlife article on page 11

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Lynne Rothberg	Chairman, planning, website.
Yasmin Dubash	Vice Chair, community safety/police panel.
Yvonne Walker	Secretary, roads and parking.
TBA	Membership Secretary.
Keith Watkins	Treasurer Elect
Peter Appleford	Committee member, social media officer.
Jeannine Newham	Committee member, public transport.
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Annual General Meeting (for the year 2020)

The AGM will take place on Thursday, 23rd September at 7:30pm at The Coulsdon Community Centre, Barrie Close (off Chipstead Valley Road).

Backup: If Covid restrictions prevent us from meeting in person, then the meeting will happen by Zoom, please check our website before travelling!

The agenda, accounts, and proposed changes to the constitution can be found on the website, along with the minutes of the previous AGM (held in March 2021).

Chairman's Ramblings.

The AGM for 2019 took place in March 2021, in the unusual form of a 'Zoom' meeting, using the internet. It was well attended by about 50 households, with the local Councillors supporting the meeting, and several members contributing to the very useful discussion.

We now have a fledgling website, and a simple consent form to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). **Please see the separate report below on “Membership”, even if you are already a member!**

This newsletter contains an invite to the AGM, which will hopefully take place 'in person', at the Community Centre in Barrie Close, but with a Zoom backup, in case we are still restricted from meeting as a group.

I have been reviewing the constitution, with the help of others, and most notably, Nigel Elliott. The current wording has ambiguity about membership, voting and subscriptions, which need resolving, and we would like to change the timing of subscriptions from a fixed year to a rolling year. A general re-write is also on the cards. This will be discussed in the AGM, and full details of the proposed changes can be found on our website, or by phoning me: 01737 552 654.

A general re-write which makes it easier to follow, removes some redundant wording, and introduces other means of communication than just the newsletter.

As we emerge from the restrictions of the last 18 months, or so, I am very grateful that I could get out into the countryside so easily for a walk during the long periods of the recent lockdowns, and there is an article about our parks and open spaces later on in this issue.

The London Green Belt Council is a campaigning body that defends the green belt against incursions of many kinds. Have a look at their website to see their work: <http://londongreenbeltcouncil.org.uk/>

I am pleased that we have had a number of articles contributed by members for this issue, and I hope that you enjoy reading them.

If you fancy contributing to a future newsletter, or helping the work of the CWRA in any way – maybe becoming a road steward, or joining the committee – please get in touch via our general email:

info@thecwra.co.uk

**Cheers,
Richard Walker.**

Planning Report

Planning Permission in Coulsdon

I have been asked to raise formal objections to a number of local developments; most of these propose replacing one or two houses by blocks of flats of varying size. The codes below are the serial numbers allocated by Croydon Council to the applications, full details of which can be seen on the council's planning website.

20/05370/FUL: A single 5-storey block containing 20 flats, at the junction of The Vale with Smitham Downs Road.

20/06602/OUT: A 4-storey building containing 9 flats at 7, Bramley Avenue

20/06661/FUL: 2 blocks of flats of 3-storeys each, with 3 houses behind; a total of 9 dwellings, at 27a & 29 The Grove

20/01397/FUL: One enormous block of seven storeys containing 39 flats at 1-3, South Drive (in place of two bungalows)

21/01340/FUL: One block of 2 terraced houses and 5 flats, with 2 houses behind, at 27 Woodfield Hill

21/01089/FUL: A single, 4-storey block of 8 flats at 36 Fairdene Road

21/02659/FUL: A single, 3-storey block of 9 flats at 29 Hollymeoak Road

Stop Press: At planning meetings in July, both the Smitham Downs Road, and the South Drive applications were rejected. Thank you to all objectors, and to the councillors on the planning committee for voting against these unwanted developments.

Larger developments

The Lion Green development, on the site of the old car park, is in the process of being built – five tall blocks providing about 150 flats. The flat owners are being allocated less than one car park space per flat, so it remains to be seen if there will be any spaces left in the residual car park for shopping or commuting purposes.

The proposed Medical Centre on part of the 'Calat' site (corner of Malcolm Road/Woodcote Grove Road) is in the design phase, but what will be built, and when it will be open to the public is still 'work in progress'.

Richard Walker

Membership

The subscription to join the Association is **still only £3 per year**, and covers all adults in the household. Please see our website for details, and keep reading!

Even if you are already a member, please read this section!

Holding information about our members in a spreadsheet, and using lists of email addresses in a mail client program, will help us keep in touch with you all, but it also brings us into the scope of the General Data Protection Regulations, and we have agreed to use this formal notice for GDPR purposes:

“The General Data Protection Regulations require us to inform you how your data is used, and how to ask for its erasure.

The contact information that we collect from you when you join (and at any subsequent times) is held by us in a digital format, and is the basis of our membership system.

We expect to produce at least one paper newsletter per year, which will also be available in digital format on the website. Other newsletters - 2 or 3 per year - will only be in digital format on the website.

We also expect to be issuing 'eblasts': regular or ad-hoc emails with items that we expect to be of interest to Coulsdon residents.”

So we need your explicit consent to opt-in for:

- Delivery of paper newsletters - using your postal address.
- Sending links to digital newsletters - using your email address.
- 'Eblasts': Regular or ad-hoc emails to inform you of news of the community, meetings or social events.

You may ask us to remove or modify your details from our systems at any time, using the contact details below.

In the event that we have no contact with you for three years, we will remove the data without being asked.

We do not pass your details on to any third parties.”

If you have not already sent us a consent form, please do so now, either by the email link from our website (on the membership page), or by post to:

CWRA Membership Secretary, 3 Vincent Road, Coulsdon. CR5 3DH

Nothing can replicate the personal touch that having a local road steward provides - which is why we would like to keep the steward system going wherever possible. We hope that many members will use standing orders, online or telephone banking to pay their subs, but we would still like road stewards to

chat to the residents in their roads and invite any non-members to join. Please contact us if you would like to help.

If you use a standing order or similar method to pay your subscription, please check that you are using a reference with your house number or name and your postcode, e.g. **49 CR5 3DH**. We have several payments that we cannot match to their owners!

If you have paid your subscription - by any method - but have not received any communication from us over the past year, it probably means that we do not have any of your details. Please get in touch with us using:

email **membership@thecwra.co.uk** or phone **01737 552 654**

Yvonne Walker.

Public Transport

- Capacity has increased on buses, but some seats are still out of use.
- 166 and 60 buses now use the same stop in Wellesley Road Croydon.
- 463/633 have a new operator with a new timetable.
- Cash is now being accepted again on London Underground.
- There is now a defibrillator at Coulsdon South Station.
- Services at Woodmansterne and Coulsdon Town have dropped to shuttle to Purley AND there is only one per hour.

All of Croydon's J C Decaux bus shelters are being removed, and hopefully, replacements will appear soon.

Southern Rail have a new kind of season ticket that gives a discount for 8 journeys in a four-week period, called a Flexi Season Ticket. It caters for travel where at least part of the journey is outside the London Oyster zone; see the website: **www.southernrailway.com/tickets/the-key-smartcard/flexi-seasons**

Peter Appleford.

Coulsdon Art Trail

Have you spotted the first decorative finials on top of some of the pedestrian signposts along the Brighton Road in the town centre. You should be able to find: a Greater Yellow Rattle; a cricket bat, ball and stumps; and the Saxon warrior Cuthraed. Masterminded by Charlie King MBE, to contribute to the project, please email **info@eastcoulsdon.co.uk**



Purley Food Hub is the local food bank set up in 2013 by the churches of Purley and Kenley to provide food to people in crisis. To date (1st July, 2021), we have provided food for 25,700 clients and family members - at three meals a day for each person, it's the equivalent of 231,300 meals.

Clients are referred by agencies such as job centres, Croydon Council, GPs, schools and mental health services; currently, we deliver the food to clients' homes. One agency said: "It's a relief you exist.", and a grateful client messaged: "A massive THANK YOU from my boys and me for the fabulous packages. You truly are Guardian Angels."

Food is donated by schools, churches, organisations and many individuals and families. We email out a list of the items we most need for clients and post it on our website, Facebook and Twitter. Donations can be brought to Purley United Reformed Church (next to Purley Hospital) on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday mornings 10.00am-12.00noon.

A time of crisis can happen to anyone, usually out of the blue and through no fault of their own. We will continue to provide food to local people going through tough times for as long as we are needed.

Contact the hub by telephone on 07546 635295, or via the internet:

E: purleyfoodhub@gmail.com W: www.purleyfoodhub.net

To advertise in our paper or digital newsletters, please contact us:

info@thecwra.co.uk or telephone 01737 552 654

The Workings of The Coulsdon Vaccination Centre

The Vaccination Centre

In January, NHS England approached community pharmacies to open vaccination sites in areas where additional capacity was required. When Coulsdon was identified as one of these areas, Valley Pharmacy answered the call, and St. Aidan's church offered the use of their hall to host the service; the service went live on the 4th of February.

The Patient Journey

Patients come from near and far, and are greeted at the check in desk, where they are asked initial medical questions, given the necessary patient information leaflets, and a vaccination record card.

The clinical lead calls patients in turn once a vaccination pod is free, and asks the required medical questions to make sure it is safe for the patient to have a vaccine. Then the patient is vaccinated in the privacy of the pod, and for certain vaccines, patients are kept under observation for a short period. Medically trained staff are on hand to deal with any issues, typically anxiety about injections, fainting and allergies.

Our Processes

Based on the rates of infection for our area, the regional NHS plans the allocation of doses of each vaccine to the centres for a few weeks ahead. From this, we create appointment slots on the NHS system, and patients book those slots. From the bookings, we plan how many staff will be needed, which varies greatly from week to week.

About an hour before the centre opens to patients, we make the vaccines up and print off the paperwork for each patient, the chairs and desks are sanitised (which is repeated throughout the day).

Admin staff organise the volunteers and other staff into their workstations and the vaccinators will report in and go to their pods. The various Covid-19 vaccines for the day will be brought in, and on hot days, the vaccines are kept in mini fridges located in each pod.

Following the vaccinations, the details are uploaded onto a computer system by our data entry staff; this feeds into the patients' NHS records.

Apart from the vaccinations, we have to deal with many different support processes and queries. Some patients need their vaccinations earlier for medical or travel reasons, some are concerned about the vaccine and some are extremely

needle phobic. We have even vaccinated people in their cars if they are too anxious or otherwise unable to come into the centre.

When demand exceeds our usual staff capacity, we put in requests to the Royal Volunteer Service and St John's Ambulance vaccinator service.

Through extremely hard work on the part of all concerned, on busy days we vaccinate 700 people. We are extremely grateful to all staff and especially to our volunteers. It is important to stress that volunteers have worked tirelessly, given up their own time and without whom the running of the centre would not be possible.

Amish Patel, Superintendent Pharmacist Director, Valley Pharmacy.

Coulsdon Litterati

Do you think there's a litter problem in Coulsdon? Have you ever sat in one of our local parks and been shocked by the amount of broken glass and empty wrappers? Would you like to help be a part of the solution?

We aren't suggesting mountains of work, but even just an hour a month can make a difference.

“I'm too busy to help! I don't have any special equipment!”

Many of us are busy, so think creatively! If walking with your dog, or taking your children to the playground, why not pick up some of the rubbish on the way, or whilst they are playing?

Through the **Coulsdon Litterati Facebook Group**, you will find many people who have equipment that you can use, including: rubbish bags, pickers and gloves. We are hoping to make a special arrangement with Croydon Council to secure some more equipment too.

“I live alone - can I pick litter with others?

I've got children/teenagers - can they help too?”

Just post on the Facebook Group and you will find other people who can join you in a local pick. COVID restrictions have made it difficult to get together in groups, but we hope that there will be regular group picks in the near future. These will be posted on the Facebook Group too.

Many of our pickers have children of all ages 'in tow', and they encourage them to join in. We just ask that you explain before a pick what is safe/unsafe, so they are clear on what they are doing.

“I'd like to do more than just pick litter - how can I help?”

We always need people to organise picks, help to contact the council or to spread the word via social media! You are also welcome to sign up as a Keep Britain Tidy Litter Ambassador too! There are lots of resources on their charity website.

“There's always a litter problem somewhere, what difference will it make?”

Studies suggest that crime and anti-social behaviour are less prevalent in places where people take pride in their area – so there is an economic driver to keeping the neighbourhood tidy! If there's an area of Coulsdon that you feel needs a blitz, let the group know so that we can help to clear it and think about putting up signage to encourage people to use the bins more.

What else is happening in Coulsdon?

We also have a Sustainable Coulsdon and Coulsdon and Surrounding Areas - Uniform Sales Facebook Groups. Both of these groups seek to improve recycling of products, packaging and uniform clothing in our local area. These help to improve the litter situation.

We take pride in our area and come together as a community to make positive improvements. We hope to see you on any of these Facebook Groups very soon.

Emilie Champion, Coulsdon Litterati and Keep Britain Tidy Litter Ambassador.

Addendum:

There is a smart phone app available called **Love Clean Streets** which makes it easy to report large rubbish items, like mattresses, which have been dumped on the street. Collection is then arranged by the relevant authority.

CWRA now have a number of litter picking kits available.



The Flying Scotsman at Coulsdon South, 1st June, 2016. Photo: Charlie King.

Coulsdon West – A haven for wildlife

One of the few benefits of the lockdowns has been greater communication and community spirit with our neighbours. Early on in the first wave of the pandemic a neighbour on our street created a WhatsApp Group, to keep in-touch with the more vulnerable among us and to share information and offers of support.

People started to share photographs of some of the wildlife in their gardens and the variety was astonishing. Foxes are of course ubiquitous and several of us have them ‘denning’ in our gardens. While seeing the cubs playing is generally delightful, some of the other behaviour was not always so welcome. WhatsApp messages about mysterious odd shoes appearing in gardens became fairly common! Luckier neighbours have badgers and deer visiting.



A deer having a shower in the rain. Photo: one of our members

The many birds are best left to someone with far more knowledge on this subject. Suffice to say, woodpeckers and a roving heron make their appearance. A neighbour also had to deal with a disoriented owl in their kitchen.

My particular (amateur) interest is in reptiles and amphibians and some species are quite abundant locally. Garden ponds, especially less formal ponds attract frogs, common toads and newts. All of which have been recorded locally.

No one has reported sightings of any of our three native snake species, although the grass snake and adder could find suitable habitat locally, especially grass snakes which are attracted to ponds.

Of the three native species of lizard, two have been reported locally. I have had one report of a common lizard near South Drive but it is the slow worm that appears to be locally abundant.



Slow worms found under a plastic sheet. Photo:Simon Little

Slow worms are often confused with snakes as they are a species of legless lizard so look very like a snake to the uninitiated. These are not only harmless but beneficial in the garden, eating slugs, snails and other invertebrates. They hibernate and breed in compost heaps and it is an offence to harm one.

The Council Planning Officers are now much more aware of the need to consider protected species during planning applications, so recording our local wildlife helps to establish the importance of our local biodiversity. I would urge anyone to record local sightings of deer or badgers, but especially any reptiles and amphibians. What we have locally is quite precious and needs protecting.

Sightings can easily be submitted on-line to Greenspace Information for Greater London (which is on the CWRA website 'links' page):

<https://www.gigl.org.uk/submit-a-record/>

Bill Kilvington.

Our local parks and open spaces

During the various lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, the beautiful open spaces in Coulsdon have been a sanctuary for many. We are acutely more aware of the benefits of nature on both our physical and our mental well-being and as restaurants and shops start to open, we should not forget these spaces. Many of us have chosen to live in Coulsdon as it provides the best of all worlds – easy access to London, good road links, and lots of green space on our doorstep. Whether you want to do a short walk in Coulsdon or a longer walk on Farthing Downs there is something for everyone.

Coulsdon Memorial Gardens

This park is located centrally in Coulsdon. It has some fitness apparatus and lots

of space for children to play, and the Poppy Cafe is located there. At the top of the Memorial gardens you'll find a portico with a rear wall which lists the names of those men from Coulsdon who lost their lives in the 1st World War. Later a bronze plaque was added in memory for those who fell in the 2nd World War.

Downlands Circular walk

There is a walk which goes from Coulsdon South across Farthing Downs and Happy Valley via Chaldon Church to the North Downs Way. It is approximately 7 miles, but there are opportunities for short cuts. It is a fantastic way to see such a lot of beautiful countryside. At the top end of Happy Valley you will also find The Fox pub – a great place to top off for a drink or some food to refuel.

Rickman Hill Park

This is a lovely park situated at the top of Rickman Hill. It has an enclosed play area for children, some tennis courts and a large open space for playing games or walking. It also has Dotty's Tea Garden which serves drinks and a variety of savoury snacks and delicious cakes.

Banstead Woods

Now a site of Special Scientific Interest, Banstead Woods is an Ancient Woodland and in the Middle Ages it belonged to the Lord of the Manor of Banstead.

Banstead Woods is now home to the Narnia trail which makes the woods and walks very popular with families. Wooden sculptures have been made of the various characters from the children's story, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe. The figures have been carved from standing deadwood by chainsaw sculptor Ella from The Tree Pirates, using the site's own existing natural resources.

Banstead Woods has a Nature Trail (a one hour walk) and a Countryside Walk (a two hour walk). Both are interesting and are signposted from the car park.

The Sutton Countryside Walk and Epsom Downs also offer great walks, and are easy to get to.

Respect

We are lucky to have such beautiful facilities on our doorstep. Please respect these green spaces and take your litter home with you or use the bins provided. These are communal areas and we should want to keep them looking lovely for everyone. As autumn sets in, do enjoy some beautiful walks and discover new places.

Yasmin Dubash.

Italy – Three years of excitement, by Roma Lambert

When I was 40, I went to Italy for 3 years. I went in September and hadn't learnt Italian properly by November, but had to send a Christmas parcel to Britain. We had moved to a suburb of Milan and, in retrospect, like quite a lot of foreigners who live there, we had probably become people of interest and amusement to the local Italians.

I went to the local post office with my parcel, unused to the conception of an Italian queue, which is summed up in the line "he who dares wins"; at last I got to the front position. I passed my parcel over the counter to the lady behind the desk. I had rehearsed the words, "Vorrei spedire questo a Inghilterra." She placed it on the scales and said a price, I happily got my purse out...

...but no! A cacophony, a mass of voices, a deluge of sound erupted "How much? No! How much did she say? Surely not!" And it became clear as the whole queue (which was not now a queue but a surrounding group) progressed from these questions to asking the postwoman if there was not a cheaper way of sending the parcel.

With great dignity and patience, by sign language, she indicated to me, that if I cut off the Sellotape, and, waving a ball of string, tied it up that would make it cheaper, and carefully passed the parcel back to me. Given the option of leaving and then having to return to this hell with my string tied parcel, I passed the parcel back to her, happy to pay whatever she asked. The cacophony broke out again! One didn't have to know Italian to know what was happening. Everyone was now involved, the pride of Italy was now involved, the kindness to foreigners was now involved.

With more great patience and more dignity, and as far as I can remember silently, the soundless and expressionless postmistress carefully took the parcel back, cut off the Sellotape, tied it with string, and stated a lower price.

With enormous relief, I paid and left showering "Grazie , multo grazie, grazie signore" left right and centre to the multitudes, sounding like Mrs Bucket – but they didn't know that.

And the next three years were just as exciting!

Becoming British by Debby Grayson

Becoming British was fairly easy. I'd long been a fan of Dickens and Austen; I'd read 'Peter Pan' to my children. I preferred tea to coffee while listening to 'Just a Minute'. And I loved custard creams and Colin Firth.

But I was also a procrastinator. It took me thirty-four years to 'pull my thumb out'. Well, the only restriction in place for me was that I couldn't vote, and, as I was not politically-minded (I'm ashamed to say), I never felt the need to apply for British citizenship.

However, upon our return from holiday in 2017 the immigration officer at Gatwick admonished me: “What?! You've lived here for thirty-four years and you haven't become a British citizen *yef*?

Completing the thirty-two page application form really wasn't that onerous once I broke it down into sections. I paid extra for a nice lady at Croydon Town Hall to check it and all the required accompanying documents.

The hardest part of the whole procedure was memorising the facts in the 'Life in the UK' handbook in preparation for the test. The book starts way back in the Stone Age and progresses through history to contemporary times, citing unforgettable place names along the way, my favourite being 'Sutton Hoo', which reminds me of Dr Seuss.

I memorised the dates of bloody battles (Bannockburn, 1314; Culloden, 1746) and tried to make sense of what seemed like a countless number of kings and queens. The handbook includes essential knowledge that no self-respecting Briton should be without:

- when the first Indian restaurant opened (the Hindoostanee Coffee House, 1810, in Mayfair)
- the first person to sail single-handed around the world (Sir Francis Chichester, 1960)
- when married women got the right to divorce their husband (1857).

On the day of the test, I was pleased that my memory served me well – the questions, all multiple choice, weren't too demanding. I'd visited London often enough to know that the Cenotaph was not A: a bridge, B: a museum, or C: a nightclub. I also knew that Coronation Street is a popular television programme, not an historical landmark.

I now proclaim to anyone who will listen how proud I am to be British, how thankful for the NHS and how lucky to live so close to London while having the beautiful countryside on our doorstep.

Here's a poem 'what I wrote' a few years ago:

Never Generalise

I love the English.
They wear shirts that say 'Keep Calm'
They tell you not to panic.

If you have a car accident
or a baby
they make you a cup of tea
with *two* sugars.

They love the Royal Family;
they hate the Royal Family.
They have political parties
with 'monster' in the title.

They know about all the wars ever fought
and who Cromwell was.
They dress up as Vikings.

But they ne'er shed a clout 'til May be out
or throw the baby out with the bath water.

They are excited by steam engines.
They brave the weather.
They find purple crocuses
peeking through fallen leaves.

They ask, "all right?"
and say they're all the better
for seeing *me*!

I love the English.

Debby Grayson