

COULSDON

WEST

NEW LEAVES

COULSDON'S LOST LIBRARY
FINALLY TAKES SHAPE—
AS A GARDEN

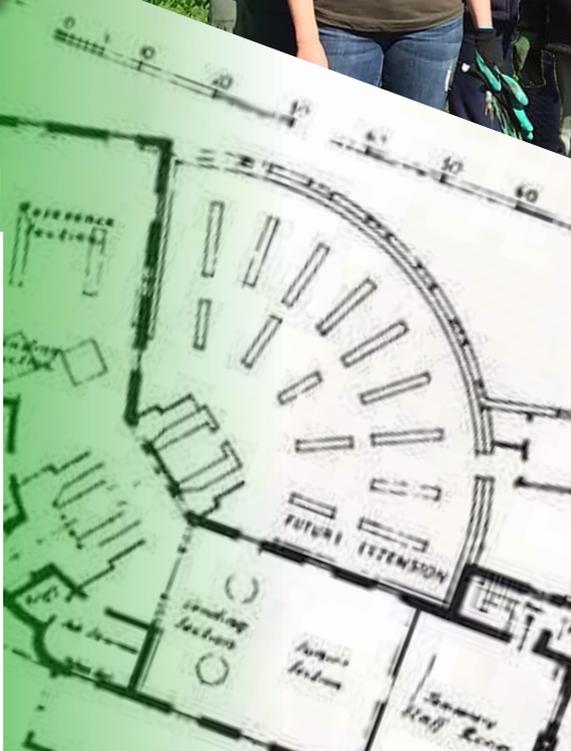
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RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION

SPRING
2022



ONCE YOU'VE
READ ME,
FORWARD ME
ON TO A
FRIEND OR
NEIGHBOUR

WHO'S WHO

YOUR CWRA COMMITTEE

RICHARD WALKER

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LOCAL PLANNING ISSUES, WEBSITE

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COMMUNITY SAFETY / POLICE PANEL

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PUBLIC TRANSPORT

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COMMITTEE MEMBER

COMMUNICATIONS

KEITH WATKINS

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COMMITTEE MEMBER

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

COULD YOU BE A ROAD STEWARD FOR THE CWRA?

HELP US DISTRIBUTE
OUR NEWSLETTER IN
YOUR STREET, JUST
FOUR TIMES A YEAR.

EMAIL US ON

INFO@THECWRA.CO.UK

FOR MORE
INFORMATION.

HOW TO CONTACT US

IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM OR QUERY FOR ANY
OF OUR COMMITTEE JUST EMAIL US AT :

INFO@THECWRA.CO.UK

AND WE'LL RESPOND AS QUICKLY AS WE CAN.

FROM THE CHAIR

TALKING ABOUT RUGBY, ELECTIONS, THIS YEAR'S AGM AND MORE...

If, like me, you enjoy watching a good, exciting game of rugby, then you were probably disappointed by the rather dismal showing by the England Men's Rugby team in this year's 6 Nations competition. If you are now looking for something to lift the spirit, I can recommend the class act that is the England Women's team. The 'Red Roses' are currently the holders of the Women's 6 Nations title, having won it 16 times from the 25 tournaments held, including 21 Triple Crowns and 15 Grand Slams. Plus a couple of Rugby World Cups, to boot.

Since the Winter newsletter, much has happened in Coulsdon to be cheerful about – and some of these topics have their own articles elsewhere in this newsletter.

An unused parcel of land behind the library has been 'discovered' and handed over to Emily Harris in order to create a new community garden project - The Hive.

The Friends of Rickman Hill Park has had its first and very successful mass scrub clearance in Mother Kitty's Shaw, along with a general spring clean of the park.

And the trains now arriving on platforms one and two are slowly approaching pre-pandemic levels, with Victoria station having had its little holiday, and re-opened.

However, planning applications are still being proposed by developers that have no place on the leafy streets of Coulsdon (or possibly anywhere!) – see my report on page 12.



SARAH HUNTER - ENGLAND CAPTAIN

Between this newsletter and the next one, we will all have the chance to vote in the local elections in May. This year, as well as selecting councillors, there will be an election to appoint a Mayor of Croydon, following a long campaign, and a referendum last Autumn. As I write this piece, various local hustings are being arranged so that you can meet and quiz the candidates. Please try and attend one, if you can.

Hopefully, the new mayor will lead the Council away from idiotic financial and planning decisions, and generally improve the lot of Croydon residents. It won't be the work of a moment, though, so we will have to be patient; compared with fixing all of the problems at the Council, performing U-turns with a giant tanker in the Suez Canal will seem like a picnic.

At the CWRA we are working towards our next AGM; it's going to be in a few months time, on July 7th at the Coulsdon Community Centre (home to the wonderful Theatre Workshop Coulsdon). Last time, in September, there was a good attendance of about 30 people; let's see if we can't improve on that.

As the severity of the pandemic appears to diminish, there will be biscuits a-plenty, and lashings of ginger beer to tempt you into coming. There might even be some entertainment! Further details about the AGM will be in the next newsletter, and on the

community noticeboards around Coulsdon. Further information will also be posted on the CWRA website and Facebook pages in the near future.

We look forward to seeing you.

Cheers,

RICHARD



IT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR

RICKMAN HILL PARK IS AN UNDER-RESOURCED LOCAL GEM. KEITH WATKINS TELLS US HOW THAT'S CHANGING.

Across the borough, Croydon Council manages 135 parks and green spaces – 45 of these have “Friends of” groups – proud local volunteers looking to protect and improve their space. And we think it’s safe to say these 45 sites are better condition than the ones without active groups.

After a traveller incursion at Rickman Hill Park in June 2020, I was inspired by the community reaction and energy to clear the park up – so I set up a Facebook group and began to realise there was a massive appetite to improve our local park, playing fields and ancient woodland. That group now has over 500 local members. There were also many groups, organisations and charities with different ideas to help enhance play, conservation or the aesthetics of the site.



It just needed some coordination and a bit of a plan; and so the Friends of Rickman Hill Park was born.

The Friends of Rickman Hill Park are now Croydon Council Approved, insured, and becoming active with a great committee and a passionate community behind them (the CWRA were pleased to help fund much of the start-up costs involved).

Croydon Council has just released a new Parks and Green Spaces Renewal Strategy 2022-25 which puts a lot of emphasis on ‘Friends of’ groups and has been criticized for relying on good will – however the flip side is that we’re better able to lobby for change and reach out to other schemes that are not on Croydon’s immediate radar. The Council does listen, and holds regular forums with the ‘Friends of’ groups. The long overdue cutting of the grass at the park should happen by mid-April, due to our continued lobbying.

There is a great website with lots of ideas, projects, and information – including some fascinating history and facts (did you know it is the highest park in London?!). Please check it out, and get involved or help support this local community group at:

www.thefriendsofrickmanhillpark.co.uk

Rickman Hill Park was once simply a field as shown on an 1868 map with the area of ancient woodland, Mother Kitty's Shaw, located in the north-east corner. Some recent preliminary attempts at confirming the age of the trees there indicate the eldest are some 360 years old.

The land on which the park stands was held for many years by a very old family, the Carews. They had held land at Hartley since the 14th century and Sir Richard Carew bequeathed the lands at Ruckkehams, (which over the years became Rickmans) – to his widow Lady Malyn Oxenbridge. His son, Sir Nicholas Carew of Beddington, a favourite of Henry VIII, was also granted the Manor of Coulsdon. Although Nicholas eventually fell out of favour and was executed for treason in 1539, his family retained Coulsdon until 1670.

The land was purchased by the Coulsdon and Purley Unitary District Council in 1927 to be used as a park.

A PATH THROUGH MOTHER KITTY'S SHAW



SIR NICHOLAS CAREW

SPRING CLEANING SUCCESS



Over forty adults, lots of children (including a football team at the end!) and a few excited dogs joined in the first 'Spring Clean' work party at Rickman Hill Park on March 13th.

Graffiti was removed from surfaces and signs and park equipment cleaned. A perimeter team, a woodland team and a bush raiding team set to work to scour the park for litter and other unwanted and abandoned items. By the end of the day, more than 40 large blue sacks of rubbish had been collected! (Unfortunately the site was then fly tipped the next day where these sacks were left for removal – but it was swiftly dealt with by enforcement officers.)

The area of ancient woodland known as 'Mother Kitty's Shaw' that lies adjacent to the park had all the existing overgrown footpaths cut back, brambles and undergrowth removed and rampant holly bushes trimmed. With nearly four tonnes of cuttings removed, it is now a fantastic wooded space to explore on a walk – the bluebells are just breaking

through, and it really is something to see for yourself.

Another work party has been arranged for 1st May at 9:30am and there are plans for more – check the website and Facebook group for live information if you want to join in and help make a difference and have some fun too!

[www.facebook.com/
FriendsofRickmanHillPark](http://www.facebook.com/FriendsofRickmanHillPark)



WE NEED YOU - AND MORE

Let's be honest. We need more members - We want to help make Coulsdon a great place to live, play, shop and work and we can't do it with just a few well-intentioned people. We need a lot of well-intentioned people. The more people we have, the more we can do and more noise we'll be able to make when developers, the council or anyone else tries to do things that would make the lives of the residents of Coulsdon West worse, not better.

Coulsdon West covers an area bounded by Smitham Downs Road to the North, Grassfield Close and The Pines to the South, Lyndhurst Road and Gidd Hill to the West and the main London-Brighton Rail Line to the East, including Windermere Road

We do our best to support local businesses and community initiatives. We have a wealth of independent businesses in Coulsdon and they deserve to be given the best chance to succeed. The voluntary and charitable groups in the area also deserve our support.

We actively review and challenge proposed developments that would adversely affect the character and the residents of the town. If you know of a project near you that is oversized, or just wrong, let us know and we'll take up the fight for you.

We work with the other Residents' Associations in the area to provide a strong, unified front against the bigger threats that from time to time appear. We're better together.

So, for **just £3 a year** you can have membership of the CWRA. For that, you get at least four newsletters a year, just like this one. Some will be purely digital, others will be printed, and for those we might need your help. We desperately need road stewards, people who will go out and help deliver the printed newsletters and help to collect the subscriptions from those who still want to pay with cash.

Do you know if there's a Whatsapp group for your road? Some of these were started during lockdown in order to collect shopping or medical supplies for elderly or infirm neighbours. If you belong to one, perhaps you could spread the word about the CWRA and encourage them to join too.

If you're an existing member, when did you last pay your subs? If it was via a road steward, then it was probably before lockdown.

New member or renewing, we'd love to have you on board. Please, just go to - **[CWRA Membership \(thecwra.co.uk\)](http://thecwra.co.uk)** and sign up.

And if you have any questions, just email Yvonne, our membership champion, at **membership@thecwra.co.uk** and she'll be happy to help.

A NEW MARSHALL BRINGS THE LAW TO TOWN

With so many businesses losing out in the battle for customers against online providers such as Amazon, it's been hard for some high streets to survive. It's why we see so many shops opening to provide personal services such as hairdressing and beauty. For the time being at least, you can't get your smart phone or lap top to paint your nails or cut your hair.

Coulsdon has fared better than most, and though we've lost all but one of our banks, (in common with much of the UK) we still have a pretty lively town centre. And shortly to join the throng are Streeter Marshall, occupying premises opposite Aldi in what used to be a betting shop. (There's probably a moral there) With Rowe Radcliffe having closed its doors with little or no ceremony, it's good to see that our legal needs will be well-catered for in future. But we asked Streeter Marshall why they chose Coulsdon for their new offices.

'For over 230 years, Streeter Marshall has been offering high quality legal services to its clients in and around the Croydon area. In 2002 we expanded into Purley and Warlingham and now we're opening a fourth office in Coulsdon, to help manage our growing client base and to better accommodate those clients in the South of the borough and beyond.'

The partners of Streeter Marshall LLP looked at Coulsdon and saw it as the ideal location to open a new branch. It's a vibrant town which we believe has benefitted from the bypass and significant investment as well as developments such as Cane Hill. The town centre itself is always busy and has many brilliant local amenities. By opening its new office right in the middle of Coulsdon, Streeter Marshall LLP will be uniquely positioned to be able to offer local people expert legal advice whenever they are in town.'

Streeter Marshall expect to be opening their new offices in mid-April.



PHOTO COMPETITION



Almost everyone these days has access to a camera. If you own a smartphone, it's an integral part of its make up, with companies like Apple, Samsung and so on spending far more time and resource in improving the cameras their phones carry than anything else, or so it seems.

So we thought we'd take advantage of that, and see if we could capture Coulsdon West's best side by asking the people who live in it to take pictures of the things around them that interest them or just make them smile. Beautiful things, curious things, silly things, things with character. Our one demand is that they need to be obviously taken in Coulsdon West. So probably not your back garden, your pet or your family, unless there's an obvious landmark or street sign in the background. Take a photo, or even several, and send your favourites to us via email using the CWRA email address

info@thecwra.co.uk

We'll review them all, and use the best in future newsletters, suitably credited. There will two outright winners, one for the under-sixteens, who will receive a £25 **Lorimer's** Voucher, and one for the over-sixteens, who will win a £25 voucher for use in **Cosyglow Home**. The CWRA decisions are final. Closing date is the **1st June 2022**.

Terms and Conditions Apply, See Over



COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS



1. To enter, you must be a fully paid up member of the CWRA. (If that seems like a big deal, remember that the annual subscription is just £3. Really, just £3 per household. And for that you get at least four newsletters a year and membership of a group of local people who want to help make Coulsdon a great place to live, work, play and shop)

2. The images you submit must be your own, original photographs.

3. You must include your name, address and date of birth with your entry. This data will not stored or shared with any third party.

4. You may enter multiple times, but all entries must be received by 11.59pm on **1st June 2022.**

5. Members of the committee of the CWRA are ineligible to enter.

6. The editor of the CWRA Newsletter is responsible for the adjudication of the entries. All decisions are final.

7. The prizes are not exchangeable for cash or an alternative award.

8. All entries may be used by the CWRA in newsletter or online/social media format. Any picture used will be suitably credited to the person who submitted it.

Want to join us? It's easy.

If you've got a banking app on your phone, just make a payment of **£3.00** to the Coulsdon West Residents' Association, quoting -

Sorting code **20 24 61**
Account Number **10293482**

and make it an annual standing order. If you haven't, then head over to the CWRA website, click on the Membership page and follow the instructions there. Use your house number and postcode as the reference, for example - '**47CR53RB**'

In either case, once you've paid, just send an email over to us on **membership@thecwra.co.uk** and Yvonne will make sure you're registered. And if you have any problems or queries, use the same address and we'll get back to you as quickly as we can.

MEMBERSHIP

PLANNING



The CWRA has raised objections to the following developments

As I pointed out last time, it has become increasingly clear that we cannot rely on notifications from Croydon Council with regard to developments happening on our doorstep.

Not only have they reduced (to zero in some cases) the number of neighbours who are notified when a planning application has been submitted, but if you wish to attend or speak at the planning committee meeting, when the application is discussed, you might not receive the invite to do so, even if you have registered your interest. Beware, it happened to me.

Whether this is a result of the many cut-backs in manpower at the Council, or a deliberate shift in policy, it falls on us, as residents, to protect ourselves now.

21/04028/FUL:

25, The Grove.

Demolition of existing family home, replace with apartment block, 8 flats.

Permission Granted

21/05084/FUL:

29, Hollymeoak Road.

Demolition of existing family home, replace with apartment block, 6 flats.

Permission Refused

21/04028/FUL:

27A - 29, The Grove.

Demolition of existing 2 family homes, replace with 2 apartment blocks with a total of 9 flats.

Permission Granted

Appeal Made - APP/L5240/

W/21/3283652: 39 flats at 1-3 South Drive.

Appeal Made -APP/L5240/

W/21/3286014: 20 flats at 5, Smitham Downs Road

I would suggest looking at the council's planning website on a regular basis. Go to <https://publicaccess3.croydon.gov.uk/online-applications/> and save it on your browser as a favourite. Then you can simply click on that rather than type out the address or search for it every time. Then, using the 'Search' function, type in your street/road name, or whatever you are interested in. All the current planning requests with that detail should then be shown.

If you want us to raise an objection, just let us know and give us as much relevant information as you have.

Since the Winter newsletter, I have received only a few requests to raise objections, and I have been notified about a couple of appeals (when the planning committee rejected an application), where the developer wants the planning inspector to overrule that decision.

Local Plan Update

When the council published their review of the Croydon Local Plan, there was a general feeling that 'this is appalling' – regarding the labelling of many Coulsdon streets (The

Grove, The Avenue, South Drive and others) and the areas around the Coulsdon Town and Coulsdon South railway stations as 'for intensive or focussed intensification'. The local Residents' Associations joined forces, and a joint response was developed; which after some careful collating and editing by our own Paul Ford, was submitted in February. Thankfully, it has at last been agreed that it would be senseless for the current council to take it further in the light of the forthcoming elections, and so the deadline for submission to the next stage has been postponed until June. With that election in mind, a meeting was arranged in late March between representatives of the Residents' Associations and the Mayoral candidates representing the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats. When questioned, all three candidates agreed that the Local Plan, as it is at present, works against the best interests of both the residents and the area and have vowed to scrap this ill thought-out plan to over-develop Coulsdon. Whoever wins in May, we will be closely watching them and reminding them of their promises should we need to.

NEW LEAVES

EMILY HARRIS TELLS US HOW COULSDON HAS GAINED A NEW COMMUNITY GARDENING SPACE - THE HIVE

Nature supported many people's well-being during lockdown. For many of us, our gardens or green spaces (even if that's a balcony or window box) took on many new roles. For some, they became a practical refuge; a gym, somewhere to have a lunch break or to take on a new hobby. For others, it was a mindful haven on their doorstep where they could re-connect with nature by listening to the birds, watching a seedling grow or simply taking in the fresh air.

Determined to tackle a new project myself, I wanted to give vegetable growing a go - but with garden centres closed, I started to wonder if any neighbours had spare seeds or seedlings that I could have. And why stop there? I had plenty of mock orange blossom cuttings that I didn't need... I wondered if people would be up for a plant swap in Coulsdon?

It was from this idea that I set up the Coulsdon Gardeners Facebook group in the summer of 2020. A group which, unsurprisingly given the timing of its inception, grew quickly and enthusiastically. People were sharing unused seeds, surplus vegetables, plant cuttings, tips, hints and advice. The community spirit was so inspiring and I'm sure everyone would agree that it would be brilliant to keep that spirit alive in a post-lockdown world.



I wondered if we could reignite this community spirit through an outdoor space in central Coulsdon. A place where, hopefully, residents will come together to literally develop something from scratch that could benefit the wider community. Inspired by the many community gardening projects around Coulsdon (including 'Banstead in Bloom's beautiful displays and 'Purley in Bloom's ongoing greening projects)

I embarked on a quest to find out if there were any 'spare' bits of land in Coulsdon that we could start a project like this. I never expected to be rewarded so greatly!! The garden behind Coulsdon Library is a fantastic space. Untouched for many years, it has been treated to a (very basic) haircut by the council twice a year and we, the residents of Coulsdon, have now been given permission to turn it into something that will benefit us all.

Following a hugely successful open morning in March, we have over 50 volunteers signed up to help in various capacities. From gardeners and weeders, to carpenters and fundraisers; photographers and marketeers to occupational therapists and Brownie leaders. Many local businesses have expressed an interest in joining in too, which is exactly what we want - members from the whole community becoming involved and using the space to their benefit too.

Plans and 'a vision' have evolved since and are really quite exciting. Did you know the library originally should have had additional building at the back of it? The library, as it currently stands, is shaped like an open book, and the extension would have had aisles of books splayed outwards to act like pages to the open book. We've been inspired to recreate this with planters, benches, shrubs and flowerbeds, so that when you look down at the library from

Google Earth, the entire library plot should be the shape of a book.

Our wider vision is to have the garden as a relaxed social space where local residents could sit quietly and enjoy some birdsong and a book. A 'happy to chat' bench where someone alone could chat with someone new. A kids' exploration corner where perhaps local schools or Brownie/Scout groups could come down and make outdoor crafts or explore the a sensory herb garden. A corner for local artists to connect with nature and display their work. A seed swap library. A flourishing meadow bank which will attract butterflies, bees and native birds.

But we are still open to new ideas! It's a garden that belongs to the entire community. So, please - if you have any suggestions we would absolutely love to have a chat about them.

It's not all going to happen at once; the ground is uneven and heavy with brambles so there's a lot of initial ground-work to be done. But hopefully, in time to come, the space will have flourished and become a welcoming haven for many Coulsdon residents. I hope you will join us!

Please email us at
thehivecoulsdon@gmail.com
if you'd like to sign up to
volunteer or have any
suggestions for the space.

THE CHANGING FACE OF MEDICAL PRACTICE

Over recent years, the way to get help from General Practice has significantly changed. Growing demand, a shortage of GPs and the impact of Covid has put General Practice under immense pressure, which is requiring practices to work differently.

What does this mean for me?

When patients phone Woodcote Medical, they are asked by a Receptionist to briefly explain their problem. Our GPs have trained our Reception team on care navigation which means that they are able to direct various health issues to the most appropriate person who can provide the help needed. Therefore, a Receptionist might offer you an appointment with one of our Advanced Nurse Practitioners, our in-house Physiotherapist, a Practice Nurse or with one of our Pharmacists rather than with a GP. The Reception team are also able to book appointments for you with a community pharmacist for a range of minor illnesses and with the GP Hubs for out-of-hour appointments.

What sorts of conditions can your clinicians deal with?

Advanced Nurse Practitioners (ANPs) are trained specialist nurses who have undertaken additional education in order to provide advanced nursing care. Their main areas of expertise are in the management of common illnesses and some have advanced training in long-term conditions. The ANP can assess and examine you, make a diagnosis and provide advice, organise blood tests or x-rays if appropriate, make referrals and organise treatment including a prescription if required. Our ANPs work closely with our GPs and will liaise frequently with them about your care.

Our Physiotherapist has the advanced skills necessary to assess, diagnose and recommend appropriate treatment for problems that affect your neck, back, joints or muscles. They act as your first point of contact and offer advice and referrals for further treatment and scans. Seeing our physiotherapist will provide you with quicker access to the treatment you need.

Our Practice Nurses are available daily for appointments. Their duties include immunisations, removal of stitches, cervical smears, blood pressure checks and contraception advice.

They also run clinics for childhood vaccinations, diabetics, asthma, heart disease services and wound care.

Our Practice Pharmacists are experts in medicines. They are responsible for reviewing patients who are on complex medicine regimens and manage and prescribe for long-term conditions. They carry out face-to-face and telephone health checks and ensure medicines are being prescribed safely and work well for you.

But I want to see my GP

Ensuring that patients see or speak to the most appropriate clinician for their problem means that GPs can concentrate on patients who have complex or multiple problems. Our clinical team are all highly skilled and knowledgeable in the areas that they specialise in. They have daily appointments available and are often able to spend a longer time with each individual patient. If a problem does turn out to be more complicated than expected, the clinician will consult with your GP. Our team work very closely together to ensure that all of our patients receive the best possible care at all times.

What types of appointments are you offering?

Contrary to popular belief, our GPs and clinical team have continued to see patients throughout the pandemic. When Covid started, we were required by NHS England to move to a 'telephone triage' model and to only invite in those patients that we clinically needed to see face-to-face. This was in order to manage infection risks and to ensure the safety of our patients and staff, many of whom are vulnerable. Feedback on these telephone appointments has been very positive from many of our patients as it has provided them with greater flexibility. It has also had the added benefit of enabling us to cut down on the volume of DNAs (Did Not Attend) and to increase the total number of appointments available. Therefore, we will continue to offer telephone triage for appointments with our GPs.

In the next few weeks, we will also be introducing online consultations. These will allow our patients to contact Woodcote Medical without having to wait on the phone or taking time out of their day to come into the practice. Patients will be able to go to our website (www.woodcotemedical.nhs.uk) and ask medical questions, report symptoms and upload photos. A clinician will then respond with the necessary information or will arrange a video consultation if required.

How will this improve access and my patient care?

General Practice is under immense strain currently and we are doing everything within our resources to provide the best care for our patients. Triaging patients to the most suitable clinician is helping us ensure that a GP will be available when you have a problem that only they can deal with. We also hope by offering an increased range of appointment types, that this will help give our patients the care that they need more quickly, safely and efficiently.



How can I get involved?

If you can spare a few hours a year to help us improve the patient experience at Woodcote Medical and ensure that it works for all of our patients, we would encourage you to join our Patient Participation Group (PPG). If you are interested, please contact the PPG at patientgroupwm@gmail.com.



COULSDON SURGERY

140 Chipstead Valley Road
Coulston
Surrey
CR5 3BB

Telephone: **020 8763 5620**
Out-Of-Hours: **111**

SPRING RECIPE

Hoisin Chicken with Egg Fried Rice

Feeds four hungry people or six with more moderate appetites

Ingredients

8 Chicken thigh fillets, each cut into 2 or 3 even sized pieces

6 to 8 tbsp of hoisin sauce

250g brown basmati rice

2 tbsp oil

2 to 3 tbsp soy sauce

1 bunch of salad onions, finely sliced

2 carrots, coarsely grated

1 large courgette, coarsely grated

2 eggs

100g of cashew nuts

- Heat the oven to 180C
- Boil the kettle. Start cooking the rice, according to pack instructions. Strain when cooked.
- Place the chicken thigh pieces on a baking tray and then coat in hoisin sauce. Place in the oven and cook for 20 minutes. (You can grill, if you prefer).
- Break the cashews into pieces and dry fry them until they just start to go golden/have black edges.
- Put the carrots, spring onions and courgette in a largish saucepan or wok with the oil (olive/rapeseed/sunflower – any will do) and heat on high for about 4 minutes. Add the cashews and strained rice. Stir until heated through. Now add the soy sauce and eggs and then stir intermittently until the egg is cooked.
- Serve with the chicken



TRANSPORT NEWS



BUSES

Changes to bus services across Croydon and Sutton are on hold until an agreement on the future funding of Transport for London is reached between the government and London Mayor Sadiq Khan. The next round of talks are in June.

Under the 10 year contract that Croydon Council signed with Valo-Smart City in 2021, new 'smart' bus shelters with free wi-fi and bus countdown trackers were due to be rolled out replacing 180 JCDecaux shelters which were removed in April/May 2021. Valo have, to date, installed no new shelters, despite their website claiming to be putting them in place as from March 2022. It's hoped the new financial year might see movement on this project, but it's already a year behind schedule.

If timetables are missing from bus stops and/or bus countdown displays are damaged or faulty, TfL are being fairly efficient in rectifying the position, once they've been informed. If you see a problem, you can let TfL know directly, or contact us and we'll pass the information on.

TRAINS

On the 25 March, it was announced that Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) would be contracted from 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2025 to run Thameslink and Southern rail services. This is a move away from the previous franchise model, with GTR now getting a fee to run the service while the Department for Transport 'look after' the ticket revenue. The contract also has a 'performance related' option for a further three years should they meet DoT targets.

Trains in the area are currently running at about 60% of their pre-Covid passenger levels. Part of this is the continuing effect of Covid on people wishing to travel, but the move to hybrid working, with more people working from home on a full or part-time basis is having a significant impact too. As a result, and despite continued lobbying, restoration of a full timetable by GTR, including the provision of four trains an hour (during peak travel times), on the Tattenham Corner line serving Coulsdon Town and Woodmansterne is not presently being considered. However, our request for a stop on the London Bridge service at Norwood Junction to allow for better connection with the Overground is under review, which if successful may also allow direct travel to Selhurst Park for local Crystal Palace FC fans. We await their decision. A new timetable from May 2022 will look similar to that published in September 2021, with few surprises. You can check for details on www.realtimetrains.co.uk which has the new information now.

Accessibility

GTR have been requested to relocate the '4 Car Stop' board on the down platform at Coulsdon South so that any four-carriage trains would stop nearer the lift. We have been told that this cannot be done while Class 455 passenger trains are in use, but with

these being retired from service in May, we're hopeful this simple action can be quickly made to improve user experience for all passengers but notably those for whom the footbridge presents a serious barrier to travel.



COULSDON TOWN

SHORT STORIES

The organisation once called the Campaign for Rural England, but now known simply as CPRE, has published a report called 'Forever Green?' highlighting the threats to our parks and green spaces. From neglect, lack of funds and barely disguised greed to simple inadequate protection from development, 50 sites are now at risk.

Unsurprisingly, Croydon's own much-criticized Local Plan is one of the major threats listed. Go to -

<https://www.cprelondon.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/10/2022/03/Threats-report-Feb-2022-V9-1.pdf> for full details.

It's just over a year since Amish and Ketan from Valley Pharmacy started battling the pandemic from their front-line position at St Aidan's Church Hall. Since February 2021, they and their team of specialists and volunteers have been doing their best to keep infections down.

The latest report from the 5th April shows that they've administered 67,715 doses of Covid vaccine, and recently, a further 425 doses of 'flu vaccine. Currently, they are serving mainly vulnerable and elderly people, plus teenagers.

Over the last two years, the feelings of isolation felt by many people living on their own have become even more acute. A friendly voice that lets the lonely and vulnerable know that somebody cares can be a lifeline. Could you be that voice?

Croydon Voluntary Action are looking for caring people to help make weekly telephone calls, and break through the walls of loneliness that age, infirmity and circumstance can build. For more detail, email volunteer2@cvalive.org.uk or visit [Befriending - Croydon Voluntary Action \(cvalive.org.uk\)](https://www.cvalive.org.uk)

Another victim of Croydon Council's financial ineptitude appears to be regular street cleaning. Nothing says more about an area that you walk, cycle or drive through than large amounts of discarded bottles, cans, wrappers, boxes etc. It says the place is uncared for. That the people don't care. Now, we know that's not true, so let's try and change it. If you see a piece of litter, please don't just walk on by, if you can, pick it up and bin it. If there's no bin nearby, then take it home and bin it there. It might not seem like much, but it can make a big difference.



Songbirds are a group of four friends who first met up while performing in local musical productions and decided to form their own female harmony group.

They've mainly entertained in venues such as hospices, retirement homes and social clubs, with all money raised donated to charity. Their repertoire includes show tunes, operetta favourites, folk and traditional songs and jazz classics - with a bit of boogie-woogie thrown in for good measure! To book, or for further details, contact Gerry on **07801 822040** or Email geraldinebirch111@gmail.com

LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

A close-up photograph of a field of green grass with numerous small white daisies.

THESE ARE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES AT CROYDON COUNCIL,
THE LONDON ASSEMBLY AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.
THEY'RE THERE TO GIVE YOU A VOICE. MAKE YOURSELF HEARD.

CHRIS PHILP

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