

# THE REVIEW



EAST COULSDON RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



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## THE REVIEW

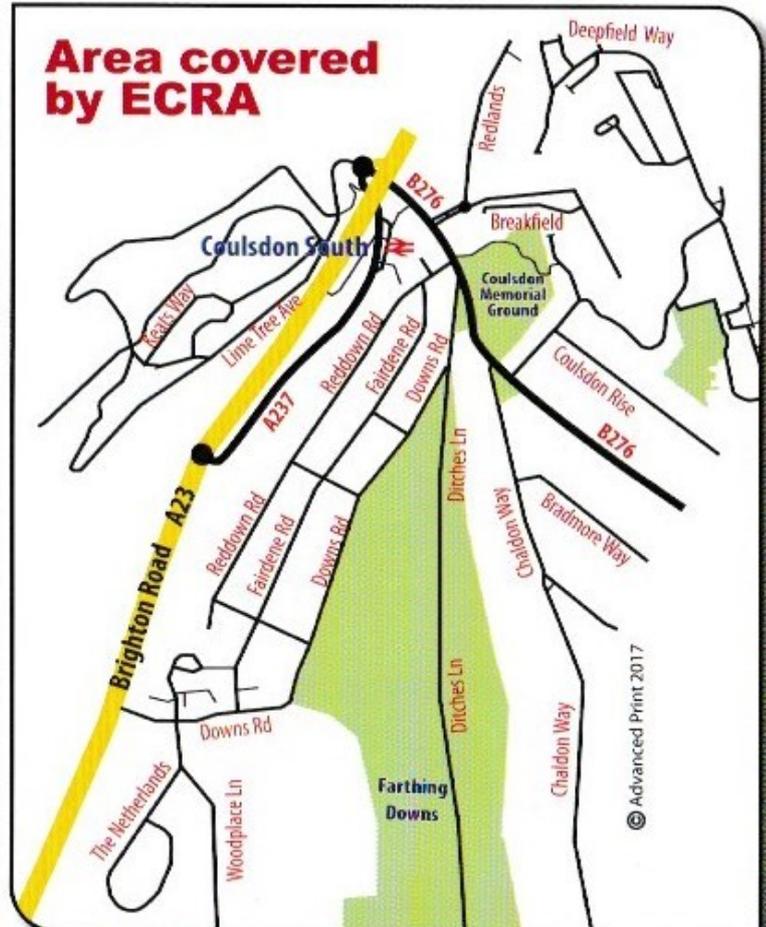
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If you would like to be included in our eblast information system, please contact our secretary by email [mcb.l@btinternet.com](mailto:mcb.l@btinternet.com).

## Area covered by ECRA



## Editorial

by Alison Sleight

Welcome to the Autumn issue of The Review. Whilst the beginning of 2020 is a dim and distant memory, overshadowed as it has been by Covid-19, it still seems incredible that we are approaching Winter and all the challenges this will bring. We hope you enjoy reading the latest updates about all that is going on in and around Coulsdon, along with some interesting articles of local interest from our residents. We welcome any contributions for The Review, be it articles or photographs. Please do get in touch if you have something you wish to share [info@eastcoulsdon.co.uk](mailto:info@eastcoulsdon.co.uk)

**A Directly Elected Mayor for Croydon:** In September the Council was presented with a written petition of over 17,000 signatures. This then requires that a referendum of the registered voters in Croydon takes place. The most sensible time to hold the referendum would be at the same time as the London Mayor election in May 2021. There is some concern that the Leader of the Council will try and find a way of not honouring the Referendum.

**Marlpit Lane Bowling Green and Putting** 017137 555231 have enjoyed a successful season but will close for the Winter in October.

Don't forget, if you delayed your **MOT** because of lockdown you need to do it now. Appointments will be harder to schedule at short notice, so book as early as possible.

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## East Coulsdon Residents' Association and COVID-19

by Charles King

When the lockdown was announced in March it was clear that the ECRA committee could no longer function as normal. We had to postpone our AGM and cancel our social events including the quiz nights. We were fortunate that we had already printed the Spring Review and with the help of our road stewards who didn't have to self-isolate and some additional volunteers, we were able to distribute it without knocking and collecting the annual subscription (this accounts for the reduction in subs and reserves in the accounts).

We have continued to act in your interest by having committee meetings online by Zoom and in back gardens where we could maintain social distancing. We have continued to engage on your behalf with the outside bodies such as Croydon council, TfL, Network Rail, the NHS, BrickbyBrick, etc. by Zoom, MS Teams, email and phone.

As we could not have the AGM in June, we decided to delay the Summer Review until July/August, but to publish an additional on-line version which can be downloaded from our web site [www.eastcoulsdon.co.uk/the-review](http://www.eastcoulsdon.co.uk/the-review)

We now find ourselves in a position where it is clear we will not be able to hold the AGM in the Autumn, our Stewards' night or the Christmas Dinner. I am pleased to say that the committee have all volunteered to carry on until we are in a safe position to hold an AGM which may be well into next year.

We will continue to engage with those outside bodies on your behalf and we will also publish and distribute The Review for the rest of the year. Please find below abbreviated accounts for the year 2019/20. The full accounts can be seen on the ECRA website.

2018-2019	Income	2019-2020
2,919.65	Subscriptions	2,154.60
0.00	Standing Orders	296.00
195.00	Donations	37.00
3,186.00	Review Adverts	3,258.00
522.98	Quiz nights	493.16
-3.00	Old Coulsdon Fair	0.00
286.75	Christmas dinner	117.00
£7,107.38	Total income	£6,355.76
<b>£2,931.07</b>	<b>Bank Balance</b>	<b>£3,387.34</b>

2018-2019	Expenditure	2019-2020
5,480.00	Review Printing	4,500.00
0	Other Printing	260.00
313.06	Public Liability Ins	313.06
25.00	Remembrance Dy	25.00
674.73	Committee exp	491.39
45.00	affiliation	75.00
581.75	donations	317.00
£7,119.54	Total Expenditure	£5,981.45
<b>-£12.16</b>	<b>Net Income</b>	<b>£374.31</b>

As you can see our main sources of income are subscriptions and adverts. It is important that we collect as many subscriptions as possible. This enables us to maintain the subscriptions at £3 and to use any surplus money on your behalf in the community.

(continued on page 6)

# East Coulsdon Residents' Association and COVID-19

(continued from page 5)

If you have not paid your subscription this year, you can help us and our road stewards by setting up a **Standing Order**. Please contact us on [info@eastcoulsdon.co.uk](mailto:info@eastcoulsdon.co.uk) and we can tell you how to do this. Alternatively, you can pay by cash or cheque (*payable to ECRA*) direct to your road steward or you can put the £3 in an envelope with your address on it through my door at 50 Reddown Road. The Covid-19 pandemic is a very serious issue and it is important we do what we can for ourselves and others to keep safe. It is pleasing to see how the Coulsdon community has pulled together to help each other. Please stay safe.

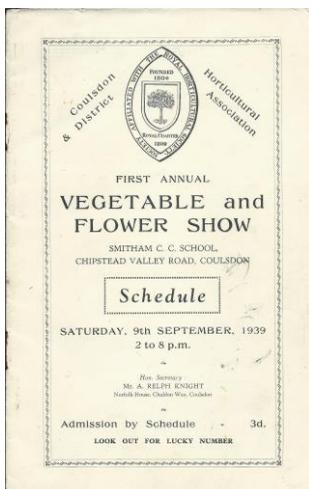
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## The History of the Coulsdon & District Horticultural Association

by Margaret Davison

The Coulsdon & District Horticultural Association was formed in June 1937, amongst the then new residents in Chaldon Way. By the end of that year the membership had grown to 150. With the long gardens leading up to Farthing Downs to get their ground in good order decided to join together and order a substantial load of manure for sharing. It was from that small beginning that the society evolved

War came and with it the “Dig for Victory” slogan which encouraged members not called up for War Service to take allotments and assist food rationing with fresh vegetables. Thus the post-war years saw the Society gradually grow in strength until in the 1960s had over 1500 members and were using a large shed behind The Forge in Marlpit Lane as their depot. There were Area Representatives for most roads and the annual fee was collected at the door together with delivery of the Show Schedule. The subscription started off at 2/- (10p) but over the years it increased very gradually until finally it was £3 per household.



The first Annual Show was held on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1939 and apart from a gap for WWII they were held every year from 1947 until 2018. Summer and Spring shows were started later. In 1947 Mr. Houghton became show organiser and continued for over 50 years. At its peak the Annual Show was held in the Drill Hall, with were over 1500 entries, but during the life of the Association its shows have been held in many venues in Old Coulsdon.

On 31<sup>st</sup> January 1976 BBC Radio recorded Gardeners' Question Time from the Purley County Grammar School for Boys (now the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College) – 300 people attended. This was broadcast on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February

(continued on page 7)

# The History of the Coulsdon & District Horticultural Association

(continued from page 6)



Over the years, various lectures on gardening were held, but these were dropped as they were not well supported. In 1977 – H.M. Queen’s Silver Jubilee – the Association took part in the procession of floats from Coulsdon to Purley using a horse and cart. By now the membership had reached over 1250.

From the early days there has been a trading section, selling compost, fertilizers, canes, garden tools, and equipment.

This also moved around Old Coulsdon, in people’s garages – including mine for a long time! – my Father being Trading Secretary for many years. Then in 1960 there was a garage at the back of Ganfield’s the Blacksmith, behind Marlpit Lane Garage. This was open Sunday mornings and the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month, where members could buy garden products at reduced prices. They had to show their membership cards. Finally the need had come for bigger premises and so, with permission from Croydon Council, we leased a site with access between 28 and 30 Waddington Avenue where we bought and had erected the double garage for our Trading Store. Our strength in trading has been our ability to sell general fertilisers, compost maker, grass seed, proprietary pesticides etc, as well as items like garden canes and more at very competitive prices. Each Spring vegetable and flower seeds came in bulk. I printed the little brown envelopes for them and they were distributed to the Committee to divide up and pack into the little envelope.



The days of the large Autumn Show being held in the Drill Hall are long gone, as the membership declined, with people not growing their own vegetables and turning their front gardens into places to park their cars. In the past the Committee had several members who served the Association for many years, and it was proving difficult to find new people to join and help with the Store Shed on a Sunday morning. In 2017 there were

only 87 members. It was at this point that discussions were held as to whether we continue, or combine with two other local Horticultural Associations. The last Autumn show was held in 2018. In 2019 having approached Banstead Horticultural and Caterham Horticultural Association it was decided that we should “mothball” the Coulsdon & District Horticultural Association and members join another horticultural association of their choice. Finally on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 the Chairman handed over the keys of the Store Shed to the Council as they will demolish it along with the other garages in the block ready for redevelopment.

Members now have the option to join Banstead Horticultural (Secretary Diana Beck contact 01737 271243 email [diana.beck@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:diana.beck@tiscali.co.uk) ) or Caterham & District Horticultural Association ([catdisthortisoc@gmail.com](mailto:catdisthortisoc@gmail.com))

# What's Happening in and Around Coulsdon

by Charles King

Coronavirus (Covid-19) continues to be one of the main issues in Coulsdon with the continued threat of further lockdowns. It is nice to see that when the first lockdown was eased in July nearly all the shops and businesses in Coulsdon were able to reopen.

The Coulsdon **Pizza Express** was not one of the 73 branches to close. The main Covid-19 casualty was **Little Lambs Softplay** where the restrictions on the number of customers made it unviable. We are pleased to see that Sophie has managed to reopen as **Bella's Coffee shop** (left) offering eat in and takeaway lunch boxes and deliveries for both adults and children 07584 353698.



**Marble** in Chipstead Valley Road has yet to reopen. Coulsdon and **Bradmore Green libraries** are now open for collection and returns only. Work has now started on the construction of the new **Lion Green Road car park** (above right) at the Post Office end of the existing car park. This requires the demolition of the old Sovereign House and the capping of the old well which originally supplied water to Cane Hill. The new car park will have 116 spaces, with a mixture of short and long term. At least 50 spaces will remain open while the new car park is under construction. ECRA have asked the council if the former CALAT car park in Malcolm Road can be used as a temporary car park.

**Cane Hill** nears the end of the Barratt Homes building programme with the last houses to be completed by the end of the year. **Haxted** have installed new windows in the south side the old Water Tower (below left) work now going on to construct the ground floor extension. The work is advancing on the old Admin block (below middle) which will look very nice when the scaffolding comes down. New steps and entrance to the Chapel are also under construction (below right). It is hoped to complete the work early next year.



**What's happening around Coulsdon:** At Stoats Nest Parade Caroline Williams has opened **Bottega Italiana** (left) Deli and Caffè. **Amazon** have installed new pick up lockers (right) at Coulsdon South and Town stations and at the Esso Garage.



**In Old Coulsdon:** DJ Hairdressers has been refurbished and reopened as **T1K Hairdressers, Barbers and Beauty**. The Old Corals betting shop is to become **Acorn Plant and Wine**

## Ash Dieback on New Hill adjacent to Farthing Downs:

by Charles King



Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) first arrived in Europe from Asia in the 1990s and spread to the UK around 2012. It is a fungal disease which is spread by spores in the wind. It has a devastating effect on Ash Trees not only discolouring the leaves, but weakening the trunk, branches and crown of the tree. A ban on all imported Ash timber was applied in October 2012

Unfortunately, the City of London have discovered that on New Hill the woodlands behind Chaldon Way has become seriously infected and a large number of trees have become dangerous. As a result they have decided to employ a contractor to cut the trees a down and remove the logs by road, The smaller branches and brash wood will be processed on site into wood chippings and fire wood which can be resold to reduce the cost of the project



They will leave and monitor some of the older Ash trees which to date have not been affected by ash dieback as they could be immune. This work has to be undertaken in the Autumn to avoid the nesting season.



For more information on Ash Dieback you can use the following websites [www.forestresearch.gov.uk/](http://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/) or [www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=779](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profile?pid=779)

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# The Helicopter Tree

by Barbara Brown



This tree is on the edge of New Hill, behind the houses in Chaldon Way. Generations of children have enjoyed climbing and sitting in it, and the name of "helicopter" has been handed down through the years. The tree is an ancient yew and is the last in a row, where the old woodlands meet the newer spinney.

Back in the 1950s, the spinney was a field, but when it was no longer cut, saplings gradually grew until they were extremely close together and only animals, ie foxes, badgers and deer, could enter. But over the years the larger trees took over, and the woodland is slightly less dense. The tree is not particularly high, but seems so to small children, and sitting there is a delight. I remember doing this - and pretending we were on a ship, looking out over the sea. I hope that this tree continues to be important to the children of our area.



## Litter Picking and Food Bank updates

by Gill Hickson



Two of the things we've been able to organise since the COVID crisis is litter picks and a local food bin. We originally litter picked at Marlpit Park, when the bins were overwhelmed by the increase in visitors, because of the fine weather and lockdown. This happened at parks across the Borough and the Council couldn't keep up. Ideally people would



take their rubbish home, rather than leaving for foxes to forage through. We have since done two litter picks off Rutherford Rise, on the school route to Byron Oasis, with Bradmore Way's Carmel & Dot and Claire from Marlpit Avenue (*above right*). Other groups and people are picking litter too. If you know of a hot spot that needs doing please let us know.



**Gill has taken on the Food Bank Collection bin** provided by Croydon COVID Group. It is located at 6 Mead Way. People have been generously donating food and toiletries which are taken to Purley Food hub on a regular basis. Purley Hub's web site [www.purleyfoodhub.net](http://www.purleyfoodhub.net) and Facebook page mentions which particular items are required. You don't have to buy specifically as all donations are welcome. *Every recipient gets a tin of beans!*



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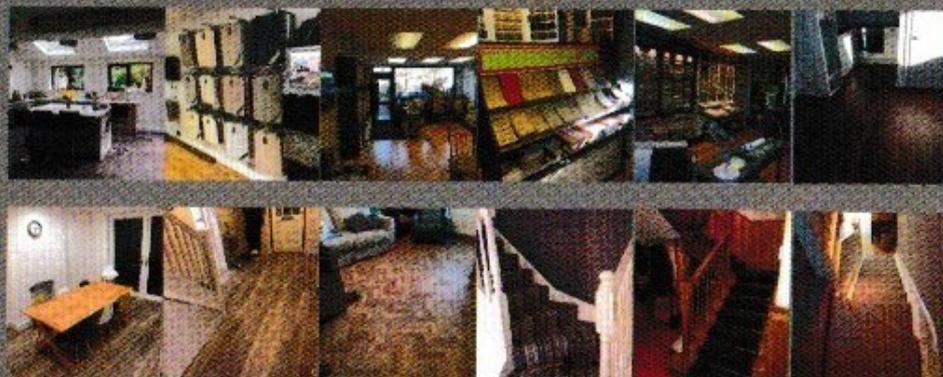
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At present there are very few steam trains running on the main line, but within an hour's drive or an easy rail journey from Coulsdon, the **Bluebell Railway** in East Sussex is one of the major tourist attractions in the south of England.

This year marks its sixtieth anniversary of one of Britain's first Heritage Railways. Rising up from a discarded route to a superbly restored Heritage Railway, running through 11 miles of beautiful rolling Sussex countryside. The railway has a wonderful collection of working steam locomotives and carriages, plus delightful country stations and operates regular services through the summer and school holidays.



It is especially famous for its Golden Arrow wine and dine Pullman trains and Santa specials. For the younger generation, adults as well, a visit to the Bluebell could provide their first ever sight and journey behind a steam engine, savouring the smoke, smells and sounds of the past, and the opportunity to stand close to one of those hissing giants and learn all about how they, and a railway, work. Like all UK attractions, the Bluebell Railway has been temporarily closed by the Covid19 virus. The good news is that it is

already back up and running, albeit respecting the present needs of social distancing and masks. Whilst most of the major special events have had to be postponed for the time being, it is hoped that they will be reinstated as soon as possible.

In the meantime steam trains are running again and the railway makes a wonderful day out, with travel in private compartments or special areas. Where individuals or families can travel in comfort and safety in the knowledge that pandemic safeguards are being scrupulously applied.

At present booking in advance is essential via the Bluebell Railway website. Currently, all journeys must start and end at Sheffield Park station as the Bluebell station at East Grinstead, normally accessed by Southern Railway train services from Coulsdon and Croydon, is not at present (August) open as a joining point. As usual, the excellent Bluebell Railway website will have all the latest information. [www.bluebell-railway.com/about-bluebell/](http://www.bluebell-railway.com/about-bluebell/) 01825 720800

**Please come and sniff the steam, get on board and have a great family day out!**

There are very few steam trains at present and none in our area. A good web site to check on steam trains is [www.railadvent.co.uk/steam-locomotives-on-the-mainline](http://www.railadvent.co.uk/steam-locomotives-on-the-mainline)

# Discovering Nature Afresh on Coulsdon's Green Belt

by Graham Lomas



We can so easily take for granted the very special landscape that borders Coulsdon. Farthing Downs was purchased by the City of London nearly 140 years ago to protect it – along with twelve other



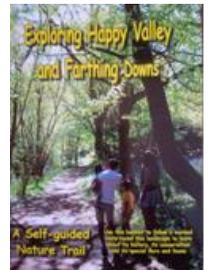
major open spaces just beyond the encroaching tentacles of London. We give little thought to what it takes to continue maintaining it. Likewise Happy Valley bought by the Coulsdon and Purley UDC eighty years ago. We insure our washing machines and our cars, against breakdown, and don't begrudge what we have to pay for holidays abroad, but give scarcely a moment's thought to the upkeep of our open spaces – who does it, and what does it cost? Some don't care at all – witness frequent instances of bulky fly tipping along Ditches Lane, and unsightly rubbish thrown from car windows along Farthing Way. It's a sobering thought that all the open spaces we have today around Coulsdon, and this southern fringe of Greater London, were set down – fixed – before WWII, 80 years ago. Nothing has been added since.

We need to treasure it all. There are signs that we do. It's not long since residents in Coulsdon raised funds to purchase at auction Woodplace Farm Fields to add to Farthing Downs, so as to stop speculative development. Regular walkers in Happy Valley will be aware of drainage channels and water pipes under foot that would have seen Chaldon Way extended past Tollers towards Chaldon across this pleasant valley.



COVID-19 brought very many people onto the Downs and into the Valley for exercise and relief from confinement and lockdown – and in a timely way spring and summer good weather helped. Timely therefore too for the Friends of Farthing Covid Downs and Happy Valley to have sharpened up – renewed – the Nature Trail that snakes across the whole area. First devised in 1970, it depended on people acquiring a little booklet to reach the 29 marker posts set out on the

landscape. In 2014 a QR code was added to each post enabling people to access pictures on their smartphone. This year, with the help of the City of London, the system has been transformed – a full colour 64 page booklet sets out the 2000 year history of the whole area, its flora and fauna, and much else about walks in the area. The QR system has been greatly enlivened by audio presentations by sixteen national celebrities – in theatre, film, TV, music and poetry. You will know them! The booklet costs £2 and is on sale at Advanced Print in Coulsdon. The QR system is free – just go along to the nearest post, tap into the code, and listen to the narrators. Happy Valley Warden, Dominic North, has arranged all this. We hope this project will bring nature afresh to a generation used to using technology. Hopefully too it will encourage residents hereabouts, and further away, to think about and treasure the much bigger landscape hereabouts, designated last July as the South London National Nature Reserve – all described in detail in '*Exploring Happy Valley and Farthing Downs*'!



## Coulsdon's Green Spaces and 11 to 18 year olds

We are blessed with so many green spaces in Coulsdon from local parks to Coulsdon Common, and Farthing Downs owned by the City of London and Happy Valley owned by Croydon Council and the open land around Cane Hill. It has been great to see how well these have been used by not only local people but by visitors from outside Coulsdon. Their use has increased considerably during Covid-19 pandemic.

There are many things to do in our parks especially for adults such as putting, bowling, an outdoor gym and more. There are football pitches and a basketball pitch for organised team games and some lovely play areas for the under 11s.

There is one group that has no facilities where they can exercise as an individual rather than in an organised or supervised event, these are the 11-18-year olds. Over the Summer we have asked a number of them what they would like to see for them in Coulsdon. As a result, in the coming months we will be conducting a wider survey of what 11-18 year olds use the parks and green spaces for and what facilities they would like to see in them. When we are ready to undertake this, we will publish the links on Facebook and on our website.

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# NHS Update: Coulsdon Medical Centre Covid-19 & Flu jabs

by Charles King



## **New Medical Centre for Coulsdon on the former CALAT site.**

Unfortunately, the revised NHS area of South West London NHS CCG have required a new study of the medical needs for Coulsdon.

The local Coulsdon Residents' Associations expressed their concern about this earlier in the summer, as it has a knock-on effect to other projects in Coulsdon, including a new Community Centre on the other half of the CALAT site. At a subsequent meeting in September the South West London NHS have confirmed that the study is well under way and 4 other sites mainly in Purley were considered, but we are pleased to say that the Calat site in Coulsdon was still deemed the preferred site. A full study of needs of Coulsdon existing population and those in the recently completed developments of over 1,000 new properties is continuing. The time scale of the report and its finding is from September 2020 with full approval (depending on the results) and the project getting the go ahead in May 2021 the next financial year. The South West London NHS CCG have agreed to continue to have regular meetings with the Coulsdon RAs to share their results. We will keep you informed.

**Defibrillators** It was nice to see that Waitrose has installed a new defibrillator on their wall in Malcolm Road, but very disappointing to see that somebody stole the existing one from outside the Library and attempted to steal the one at Waitrose.

**Attending A&E, local GP hubs and Minor Injuries Units:** The NHS are asking during the Covid-19 pandemic that unless it is critical that you do not just turn up, but you call 111 first and get an appointment at the appropriate location. This is to try and cut down the number of people waiting around in waiting rooms to help maintain social distancing.

### **However, if you need urgent help please dial 999.**

**Covid-19 and Flu jabs:** The Government is keen that as part of the precautions for Covid-19 that you should continue to wash your hands regularly, wear a face mask/covering in shops and on public transport and maintain social distancing. They want to prevent a large outbreak of flu in parallel with Covid-19. As a result they are asking for as many people as possible to have the flu jab this year. In addition to GP surgeries, local Pharmacies and Boots in Coulsdon and some supermarkets the NHS is opening drive-through flu vaccination clinics at Ikea off the Purley Way and Crystal Palace's Selhurst Park stadium. This can be arranged through your GP as normal. The cost of flu jab can range between £8.00 and £15.00. However, it is free to many people in these categories :

- Are aged 65 or over;
- Are pregnant;
- Are a health or social care worker in a residential or a nursing home, hospice or with a home care provider;
- Are a resident of a nursing or residential home;
- Share a household with someone who has an impaired immune system;
- Have underlying health conditions such as diabetes, heart, kidney or HIV
- Children aged from two to Year five in primary school

For a full list of categories visit [www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/vaccinations/flu-influenza-vaccine/)

# Public Transport Report

by Charles King

**Covid and public transport:** The government seems to issue mixed messages on the use of public transport. In August they were telling people to return to public transport, yet as soon as there is a spike, the advice is to avoid public transport. The RSSB (the Rail Safety Body) have undertaken a study which estimates that there is a 1 in 11,000 chance of catching Covid-19 on trains. This is reduced further if you wear a face covering. German Railways' study found no evidence of transmission on trains. There have been no cases of the German track and trace system having to track down train passengers.

**Rules remain the same:** Work at home if you can, avoid busy periods, wear a face mask/covering, wash your hands before and after a journey, try to maintain social distancing, carry a hand sanitiser. Observe the one-way systems at many stations. Please obey staff instructions.

**Sunflower badge/lanyard Scheme:** Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower badge or lanyard discreetly indicates to people around you, transport staff, colleagues, health professionals and others that you may need additional support, help or a little more time. <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com/> (they also offer face covering exempt cards).

**Trains:** Usage is now between 40% to 50% of pre-Covid-19 usage; down during peak times, but growing in the off-peak. Until December a Saturday plus service will remain..

**Network Rail** has suspended the work on the embankment between Coulsdon and Hooley until January 2021

**GTR** have announced they will start refurbishing their older 377/387 stock (the green ones). This will include power and USB sockets at the seats



**Car parking:** Coulsdon South car park is now often full by 9am, but there is parking on the forecourt after 9.30 am. Lion Green Road car park has now been reduced to 50 spaces

**School bus routes**, such as 612, 627 & 633 along with the 60 & 466 that start from Oasis in Old Coulsdon, will now be for school children only. On other routes at school times alternate buses will be designated school children only and non-school children.



On Buses the social distancing passenger capacity has been revised to 30 passengers on double decks and between 11 and 14 on single deck buses (the driver has some discretion for family groups).



We are pleased to see usage of the **404** is starting to pick up on Cane Hill and Tollers estate. We are still awaiting a date for the diversions via Shirley Avenue and Placehouse Lane. The **405** is now operated by Arriva with new hybrid buses. However, their introduction is delayed due to the three months Covid-19 closure of the Wright Brothers factory.

(continued on page 21)

# Public Transport Report

*(continued from page 20)*

The Government, the Mayor and Croydon continue to close off streets and introduce **new segregated cycle lanes** which have caused a number of bus stops in central Croydon to no longer be served. After much lobbying by East Surrey Transport Committee route **405** and **412** now serve the Park Street stop providing a common southbound stop with routes **60, 166 & 466**. We are expecting TfL to announce some changes to local routes during October.

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## **ECRA, Planning and the Government's Proposed Changes**

*by Eleanor Richardson*

**The existing situation:** At present the planning system requires each local authority to undertake a Local Plan and submit this to a planning inspector at a public enquiry which may last for two weeks or more. This sets the planning guidelines for each area within the authority (ECRA attended and made representation at the Croydon enquiry). At present Croydon has 16 local areas.

Developers who submit planning applications must take into consideration the local plan within the areas where they are developing. One of the issues we have is that there is pressure from the Government, the London Mayor and Croydon to build more houses. As a result, Croydon have in their local plan decided to intensify the areas in the south of the borough including Coulsdon. This encourages developers to purchase older properties demolish them and build flats as this complies with the local plan. As building 10 or more flats requires the inclusion of social housing, we continually get planning applications that are for 9 flats regardless of the size of the plot.

Maureen, ECRA Secretary, makes us aware of all planning applications in our area and we look at each one and respond accordingly. We sometimes object, support or make no comment. We do accept that some properties are past their useful life and are in poor condition and that there is a need for housing, although we do not believe that there is a need for a multitude of small flats with little amenity space; often small houses would be better. We have a preference for purpose-built flats rather than turning existing properties into houses of multiple occupation.

At present all have the right to object to each individual planning application and if a local councillor or a recognised RA objects it will go to a full planning committee. However, the objections have to be genuine planning objections, such as the massing is too great, it is out of keeping with the area or street scene, a surface water problem, does not comply with the local plan etc, not just "we do not want it", although having a number objections does help in bringing a development to the attention of local politicians. The importance is the subject and reason for the objections. If an application is rejected the developer has two options to appeal to the planning inspector or submit a new application. At least under this system we and local residents have the ability to have our say on all individual planning applications.

*(continued on page 22)*

# ECRA, Planning and the Government's Proposed Changes

(continued from page 21)

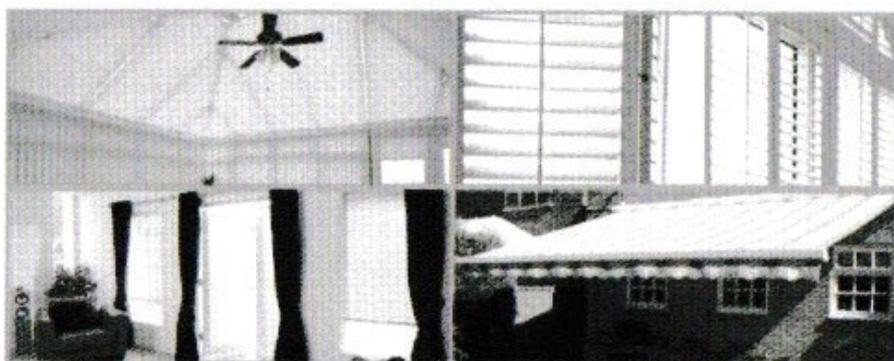
**The Government's proposals :** ECRA has serious concerns over the Government new planning proposals which are to reinvent the planning system by creating a streamlined process for planning approvals. The government are suggesting three types of areas: **Protected Areas**, which will include, we believe, areas of green belt land, nature reserves and historic centres such as Windsor or York; **Renewal areas** which would provide "gentle densification" (whatever that means) and **Growth Areas** which provide for the provision of substantial new developments including towns or suburbs.

We understand that the situation would remain broadly as it currently is for protected areas, but provided that developments comply with the local plan the consultation element of planning permission would be removed from applications within the second two categories. This means that the only time that the public would be consulted on planning in their area is when the local plan is being put together.

There is provision for neighbourhood plans to be part also of the mix, but this currently available, though difficult to finance (as they have to be funded and maintained by the local residents' association or the parish council that produce them).

We believe this removes both local democracy and the right of residents to object to individual planning applications and we are working on our response which we will share on our website and Facebook page once it is complete.

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