

In my
opinion

Clubs' duty to their locals



I AM extremely proud of the part I played in helping to develop Charlton Athletic as one of the top football clubs in the UK for the scope of its community work. Football clubs have a duty to make a meaningful contribution to the community from which they draw their support. For many that means children's coaching courses and, indeed, this is still a major part of CACT's (Charlton Athletic Community Trust) work. But it also plays a huge role in combating social ills and in addressing issues such as reducing crime, improving health, raising educational attainment and increasing pathways to employment. When I give talks on corporate social responsibility in football there is surprise at just how much work is undertaken in the community. CACT has a regular presence in schools, working with disadvantaged groups and through crime reduction initiatives and community-based

football coaching sessions. Charlton's community initiatives began, albeit on a very small scale, during the first of my two spells with the club back in 1988 when along with our club sponsors at the time, the Woolwich Building Society, we started a programme of school visits and summer promotions at borough events. However, the club's work in the community really got started when the football club returned to The Valley in 1992. With just one member of staff - Jason Morgan, a bag of footballs and a telephone. It has now grown into an organisation that employs 37 full-time staff and 139 casual coaches and engages with approximately 7,500 young people on a weekly basis - and Jason is now the chief executive of CACT. If you are interested in finding out more about the work of CACTgo to the website www.cact.org.uk or call 0871 781 2095. Jason and his team would be delighted to hear from you.

Steve Sutherland

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Massive cash boost for Severndroog

CONSERVATIONISTS are a step closer to having a new visitor attraction in Shooters Hill after scooping a grant of almost £600,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Campaigners and fundraisers who have been trying to restore Severndroog Castle were celebrating a £595,000 grant award last week.

It means the triangular, three-storey Grade II* listed castle which stands on the top of Shooters Hill can be restored and opened up for public use. Members of the Severndroog Castle Preservation Trust have been working to save the castle being sold off for seven years. The charity secured a 30-year lease

from Greenwich Council and launched a 'sponsor a brick' fundraising campaign to help fund refurbishment works. It plans to restore the building as a visitor attraction, educational centre and tea room and make it available to local schools and community groups. The castle would also be

available for hire for events such as weddings and civil partnerships. David Goodfellow, of the Severndroog Castle Building Preservation Trust, said: "We are delighted with the confirmed award from HLF, which is a major step forward in achieving our objective of restoring this unique building."



THE PARK OF DREAMS: an artist's impression of what it will be like in Greenwich Park 2012

Park events get the nod

Board's green light for 'great' venue

by Peter Cordwell

THE best horses and riders in the world will be competing on our own doorstep.

Greenwich Council's Planning Board has approved the temporary use of Greenwich Park for the London 2012 equestrian and modern pentathlon events.

The application, agreed by the Mayor of London and supported by all the statutory consultees, was presented at a public meeting at Woolwich Town Hall. The decision to approve the application was by ten votes to two.

The approval covers the use

of land in the Royal park, the National Maritime Museum and Blackheath Circus Field for the equestrian, modern pentathlon and Paralympic dressage events.

Seb Coe, chair of the London 2012 Organising Committee, said: "We are delighted with the outcome of this democratic process and thank the Greenwich Council Planning Authority and all the people who came out to speak for and against this application."

"The message is loud and clear. This great Park is on loan to the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and the people of the world. We must return it to the residents of Greenwich, to

Londoners and visitors from the UK and around the world in the same condition, or better, than it was loaned to us.

"We take this responsibility seriously and will continue to work with the park authorities, resident and park user groups and the people of Greenwich as we develop and implement our plans to stage an extraordinary event in 2012."

Once the Olympic and Paralympic Games are over the site will be restored to its former use and condition in full accordance with a Site Reinstatement Plan to be agreed by the council in consultation with Royal

Parks and other bodies.

The temporary structures include a 23,000-seat arena, training areas, stabling, a cross-country course, operational and site set-up and removal compounds, vehicular and pedestrian access areas, operational parking and ancillary structures.

An advisory group to include the council, Royal Parks, English Heritage, Natural England and the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) will be established to formally oversee the implementation programme. For more information on Greenwich's Olympic preparations visit www.greenwich.gov.uk/2012

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