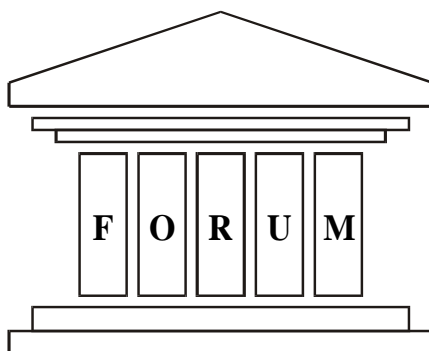


MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Spring 2012

Issue No 46

In this issue of FORUM

- Page 2
- Letter from the Chairman
 - Garden Grabbing? Not in Merton Park!
 - Street Surgeries
- Page 3
- Wimbledon House Site Sold
 - Nelson Local Care Centre
 - Emma Hamilton Site Plans
- Page 4
- Morden Regeneration Plans
 - Conservation Areas Advice Leaflet
 - John Innes Path
- Page 5
- Diamond Jubilee Celebrations
 - Olympics in Merton
 - Rough Sleeping
- Page 6
- Primary School Places
 - John Innes Recreation Ground
 - Future Meetings



TURNING RIGHT OUT OF DORSET ROAD?

We have learned that the Dorset Road/Kingston Road box junction is being enforced from the start of May. For many years, motorists turning right from Dorset Road into the Kingston Road have routinely entered the box and remained there whilst Kingston Road traffic is stationary in order to make the turn. This is not allowed by the Highway Code and council staff intend to catch vehicles making this illegal turn. In fact warning letters have been issued since early April and from now on penalties will be enforced.

We have had urgent discussions with council officers. Enforcement after all these years will come as a shock to many people. We have asked for a yellow notice to be placed prominently to warn motorists of the new regime, **before fines are imposed**. We are also asking that a longer term solution be found. We must avoid tempting otherwise law-abiding motorists into breaking the law by presenting them with an unsatisfactory junction layout.

DUNDONALD SCHOOL EXPANSION - NEW PLANS

Merton Council has submitted new plans to expand Dundonald School close to the north of our Ward. They can be viewed at: www.merton.gov.uk/schoolsconsultations using the application number 12/P1058. The plans provide a new two storey facility to meet Merton's obligation to provide sufficient primary school places. The consultation period is in progress; call 020 8545 3777 or send comments to planning@merton.gov.uk by **24 May**.

OUR NEXT MEETING IS 3 JULY

Our next meeting on 3 July includes a talk on the Wandle Trust and is followed by our **Annual General Meeting**. Do come along to hear reports from the Chairman, Treasurer and Councillors. We have decided not to have our usual June meeting as we are sure you will all be enjoying the Diamond Jubilee long weekend (page 5).

Merton Park Ward Residents' Association (MPWRA) sponsors three Independent councillors who form Merton Park Ward Independent Residents (MPWIR) on Merton Council

Karin Forbes (karin.forbes@merton.gov.uk) – 58 Mostyn Road SW19 3LN – 020 8540 3314

John Sargeant (john.sargeant@merton.gov.uk) – 2 Langley Road SW19 3NZ – 020 8542 9361

Peter Southgate (peter.southgate@merton.gov.uk) – 22 Dorset Road SW19 3HA – 020 8542 2053

www.mertonpark.org.uk

A LETTER FROM MPWRA'S CHAIRMAN

2012 was always going to be a busy year, with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympics, but it is also shaping up to be a decisive one for Merton Park. We have contributed our views to the Council's consultation on a number of long term policies and plans for specific sites in the borough. The long lingering issues of the Nelson Hospital and Wimbledon House School also look like they are close to being resolved. You can read more details about each of these in the articles in this FORUM.

The events of the year that may prove to be turning points, however, are the London mayoral election and the drought. Siobhan Benita did a valiant job in the mayoral election to highlight the cause of non-party politics for local government. Ultimately, she polled 4% of the vote but the media debate on how new ideas coming from outside the established parties should be given an airing was, I think, good for local democracy.

The drought has highlighted how we need to modify our lifestyles as our environment changes. Despite the tabloid glee as the announcement of a hosepipe ban was followed by the wettest April on record, the drought is far from over. The past two years have been the driest on record and the London rain shortfall is in the order of 12 inches. So, although the wet April is

welcome in some ways, we are nowhere near being back to 'normal'. In fact 'normal' has probably changed. Climate scientists were predicting back in the 1980's that increased frequency and severity of droughts and floods would be a feature from the early part of the 21st century. I'm sure, however, that rather than taking pride in their forecasting abilities they are frustrated at the slow adoption of measures to prevent further climate change. At the April meeting of MPWRA we heard from the Living Green Centre at Morden Hall Park. They are a centre of excellence for us all to explore actions that we can take to cut carbon emissions in our homes.



It is a feature of human life that the future is uncertain. But we can both enjoy the moment and make simple adjustments in our lives to create a better future. I hope you will enjoy participating in the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and find some time to visit the Living Green Centre.

Harold Forbes, Chairman

GARDEN GRABBING? NOT IN MERTON PARK!



Spacious gardens are one of the defining features of Merton Park and contribute much to the green and open character of our area. We know this attracts people to come and live here and to resist developments that threaten to encroach upon its open aspects. So residents of Sandbourne Avenue were understandably concerned

when the owner of 116 Kenley Road (on the corner with Sandbourne Avenue) divided the rear garden into two plots, and submitted a planning application to build a two storey detached house with basement on the rear plot, fronting directly onto Sandbourne Avenue (11/P2773 and 11/P2774).

Several objections were submitted, and planning officers refused the application without feeling any need to refer it to the Planning Applications Committee for a second opinion. Their reasons for refusal have implications for any applications on similar corner sites in Merton Park and are worth reporting in full.

The proposals by reason of their design, siting, height, bulk and massing, would:

- a) *Fail to respond to or reinforce the locally distinctive pattern of development within the area, **resulting in the loss of a visual gap that contributes to the suburban character** and local distinctiveness of the adjoining townscape*
- b) *Appear incongruous, out of character with and harmful to the visual amenities of the Sandbourne Avenue streetscene*
- c) *Be visually prominent and unduly dominant to the detriment of neighbour amenity*
- d) *Fail to ensure adequate levels of privacy for future occupiers of the site or maintain adequate levels of privacy for existing neighbouring occupiers.*

The emphasis on the role of gardens in creating visual breaks between the houses, and how this helps to define the character of the area, would seem to preclude any infilling of similar corner sites. But that's not to say another developer won't try!

Cllr Peter Southgate

WOULD YOU LIKE A STREET SURGERY IN YOUR ROAD?

On Saturday 21 April your Ward Councillors held a street surgery, calling on all households in **Poplar Road South and Grasmere Avenue**. It was a good opportunity to meet residents and we heard about several problems. We could resolve some issues on the spot; for others, we shall be getting back to individual residents soon. If you would like us to hold similar events in your road please get in touch.

WIMBLEDON HOUSE SITE SOLD

Wimbledon House is locally listed and occupies a prime location at the north-east entrance to our Ward at the top of Dorset Road.



It has been empty for some years and your Ward Councillors have been pressing for its prompt sale. On 12 April, Merton Council completed the sale to Casterbridge Nurseries Ltd, who own and operate 27 Day nurseries and pre-schools in Greater London, East Anglia and the South East.

They tell us that they will be extensively refurbishing the property for use as a nursery. During this time security will be maintained on the site. Casterbridge hope to open the nursery in early 2013. Their website is www.casterbridgecae.com and we have invited them to talk to our November meeting about their progress and future plans.

Cllr John Sargeant

NELSON LOCAL CARE CENTRE

Plans to transfer GP practices in Church Lane and Cannon Hill Lane to the Nelson site alongside many medical services were submitted to Merton Council in late January. A separate care home is included in the plans, on the western end of the site currently used for parking.



Members of the public sent nearly 80 submissions to the consultation which ended in April. In their submission, MPWRA welcomed the service improvements which the Local Care Centre (LCC) could bring but expressed concerns over the reduced parking provision both at the Nelson and around the nearby Rush which would impact local businesses. They saw dangers in the more restricted traffic flows into and out of Watery Lane. They also questioned design aspects of the LCC itself and the proposed care home.

It is fair to say these comments reflected the great majority of submissions **and they have made an impact**. Partly as a result of residents' submissions, the care home developers, McCarthy & Stone, have been

asked to refine their proposal. Designs to landscape the Rush, with their associated traffic problems, are being reviewed and the NHS has been asked further questions about their proposed parking regime.

When new plans are submitted on any of these issues they will be posted on the Council's website and there will be consultation on these specific points. We shall of course keep residents notified through our email alerts (email to mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk and put "alerts" in the title to receive them). It is expected that the revised plans will be considered at Merton's Planning Applications Committee on June 14.

All this represents yet another delay in the NHS timetable (approval had been expected in February). But if it results in better decisions the wait will have been worthwhile. Meanwhile, we are pressing for clarity not just about the plans but also what impact demolition and construction will have on GP and Nelson patients' services. The Nelson plans can be viewed on Merton's website by going to:

<http://planning.merton.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorerAA/GeneralSearch.aspx> and inserting 12/P0418 in the Application Number.

Cllr John Sargeant

EMMA HAMILTON

A planning application has been submitted to demolish the Emma Hamilton pub on the Kingston Road and replace it with a development of up to five storeys, with commercial use at ground floor level and 57 flats above in a mix of studio, one, two and three bedroom units. Twenty-five per cent of the flats would be defined as 'affordable'. There have been about 100 objections to this proposal, with the main reasons cited being:

- *Bulk and massing: it's too big for the site*
- *Loss of a community space with no replacement*
- *Lack of amenity space within the development*
- *Increased pressure on traffic and parking*

- *Increased pressure on primary school places*
- *Blockage of light to Mawson Close*
- *Questions about the need for any more retail space in this location*

The latest news is that the developers are reconsidering the scheme. They have not abandoned the original proposal but may produce an alternative plan. There will be a meeting of the Wimbledon Chase Residents Association on 29 May from 8-9pm at Botsford Road Baptist Church to discuss any further developments.

Cllr Karin Forbes

MORDEN REGENERATION PLANS

Paul McGarry, Future Merton Manager, attracted a record audience when he introduced plans for Morden at the May meeting of the MPWRA at Poplar Primary School. No wonder – Morden town centre could be quite transformed with pavement cafes, piazzas and tree lined boulevards in a few years' time. We could eventually see direct Tramlink services connecting Morden town centre with Wimbledon and Sutton.



The Underground station and its forecourt are seen as the key to the look of the town centre. Bus stops will be redistributed along London Road to free up space for pedestrians and create a piazza in the forecourt. The office block above the station belongs to Transport for London (TfL). It will be redeveloped (**within** its current

height) with retail space to attract high street brands, as they begin to see commercial potential in a revitalised Morden.

The current one way traffic system makes the Civic Centre feel like an island isolated on a triangular roundabout. Instead, two-way traffic will be reintroduced along London Road, allowing Crown Lane to develop as a more shopper-friendly parade and easing movement between the station and the Civic Centre.

The Council is confident it can deliver on these plans because it owns many of the key sites, together with TfL. Firm design proposals will be published in a LB Merton draft planning brief in December followed by a formal consultation. Your Ward councillors will be taking a keen interest in the details and making sure you have a proper chance to participate. We want to see opportunities for independent retailers and a parking regime that does not drive shoppers away to North Cheam or Colliers Wood.

The slides from Paul McGarry's talk have been placed on our website www.mertonpark.org.uk. Watch out for our email alerts as the plans unfold – and please give us your feedback.

Cllr Peter Southgate

CONSERVATION AREAS – ADVICE TO HOUSEHOLDS

Our Ward contains several Conservation Areas (CA): John Innes Merton Park CA, Wimbledon Chase CA and parts of John Innes Wilton Crescent CA and Merton Hall Road CA. A new pamphlet explains the rules governing alterations to buildings in these areas. The text was prepared by MPWRA in response to requests from our residents who wanted a clear explanation of do's and don'ts. So, as well as explaining the background, it also provides practical advice on how properties can be

modified within the rules – and what is not allowed. We would strongly suggest that if you are considering work on your property and you live in a CA you should consult the leaflet. It can be accessed at www.merton.gov.uk/designandconservation and paper copies can be obtained from FutureMerton at the Civic Centre or contact me.

Cllr John Sargeant

JOHN INNES PATH

In the last edition of FORUM we complained about the length of time it was taking for the Council to come to a decision on the future of the footpath which connects John Innes Park to the John Innes Recreation Ground, dividing the Rutlish School site in two. The consultation on whether the path should be closed during school hours took place late in 2010.

So we were relieved when the report finally came to Cabinet in January this year and pleased that members decided against partial closure of the path. **The path will be kept open at all times.** The school boundaries on either side will be secured with pedestrian

access gates that can be locked remotely in the event of an emergency.

We recognise there is a balance of risk to be struck between protecting pupils and staff from intruders and forcing path users to detour via Watery Lane. We know how important the path is to frequent users, especially mothers taking toddlers to play in the Park and members of the Merton Park Bowls and Croquet clubs and are confident Cabinet has made the right decision.

Cllr Peter Southgate

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS



There are a number of exciting events planned for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee at the beginning of June. The annual **Mitcham Carnival** has been timed to be part of the celebrations and will take place on **Saturday 2 June** with the

theme of "Elizabeth to Elizabeth" celebrating visits by both Queens to Mitcham. The parade of imaginative floats will start from Figges Marsh at 12.30. At the carnival there will be jousting, a funfair, stalls, children's entertainment and refreshments.

On **Sunday 3 June** Merton Park will be holding its own '**Big Jubilee Lunch**' picnic in the glebe field behind St Mary's church from 12.00 to 5pm. There will be music, races, games, crown-making for children and a tug

o'war for the grown-ups. To avoid overcrowding, **we are issuing tickets which are free** and can be obtained by emailing c_stutt@yahoo.co.uk or calling/texting 07980 337502. **If you find you can't attend on the day, please return your ticket to us so that it can be given to someone else.** The event is being jointly organised by the MPWRA, St Mary's Church and the John Innes Society.

On **Monday 4 June** beacons will be lit across the UK and Commonwealth and Merton Council is planning a free event in Morden Park as part of their beacon lighting ceremony. There will be a funfair and bands playing on the bandstand. The event starts at 4pm and the beacon lighting will close the event at around 10.30pm. Bring a picnic and come and enjoy the fun!

Cllr Karin Forbes

OLYMPICS IN MERTON

Taken together with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, it promises to be a busy summer in Merton with something going on for everyone. As well as the annual Wimbledon tennis fortnight (25 June to 8 July), the AELTC will also host the Olympic tennis three weeks later (28 July to 5 August). It should not present travel problems, as the number of visitors to the Olympic tennis will be fewer than to the annual fortnight. A newly marked heritage trail will encourage visitors to walk from Wimbledon station to the AELTC in Church Road, reducing the need for special buses.

If you are planning to move home in South West London, the weekend of 28/29 July would be one to avoid. On Saturday the men's cycling road race will make its way out from central London through Putney, Richmond and Hampton Court into Surrey and the infamous zigzag circuit of Box Hill (9 times!), then back to central London. On Sunday the women's cycling road race follows the same route, completing two circuits of Box Hill. There will be road closures and good, free viewing opportunities along the route (but none in Merton). The London - Surrey Cycle Classic won by Mark Cavendish over the same route on 14 August last

year served as a rehearsal for the Olympic events; TfL estimates that road traffic was reduced by 28% compared to normal volumes.

Contrary to what the popular press would have you believe, 65% of the Tube network will be unaffected by the Olympics. Southfields and Wimbledon (District Line) are the only local Tube stations to be affected. But some central London interchanges as well as Stratford and Canary Wharf will become very congested. London Bridge is the one to avoid if at all possible; TfL forecast delays of more than 30 minutes during the evening peak (1730 to 2030) if commuters do not change their usual travel patterns or use alternative stations (Cannon Street and Blackfriars are the nearest).

A website to help Londoners plan around the Games is already operational at www.getaheadofthegames.com while for those lucky enough to have tickets, the London 2012 Spectator Journey Planner www.london2012.com calculates the optimal route from anywhere in the country.

Cllr Peter Southgate

ROUGH SLEEPING

For several months, a number of people have been occupying one corner of the Peel House Car Park which serves Sainsbury's in Morden. There have been numerous complaints of offensive and intimidating behaviour. These people have now been removed. An ASBO (Anti-social Behaviour Order) and eviction notices have been served and the area has been cleared and cleansed. If they return they will face court charges.

Anyone following the case will have been struck by the length of time it takes to remove people even when the situation is clearly unacceptable. Just a year ago we saw the end of the lengthy legal process required to remove squatters from Wimbledon House School. There does seem to be no way to circumvent the due legal process. Looking to the future, we are discussing with local police what steps can be taken to avoid further occupations of the car park.

Cllr John Sargeant

PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

At the end of April local children received their offer of a primary school place for this September. The Council has been pursuing a vigorous primary school expansion plan to meet rising demand and as a result was able to offer 2,670 reception places, a 30% increase compared with just four years ago.

Just over 80% of children were offered their first choice school, which was an increase over last year and higher than the London average of 78.2%. Over 90% of Merton children received one of their top three preferences and the Council is confident that when the second round of offers go out at the end of this month they will be able to offer every child in the borough a primary school place.

Cllr Karin Forbes

JOHN INNES RECREATION GROUND

Last July, a cricket ball landed out of the blue distressingly close to a small girl playing in her garden in Aylward Road, near the recreation ground. Initially, suspicion fell on some boys playing nearby but it didn't quite seem a plausible explanation.

With a flash of inspiration worthy of Sherlock Holmes, I asked to see the scorekeeper's records for Merton Cricket Club. They revealed that a batsman from a visiting South African team had hit a mighty six at the exact time of the incident.

There was a clear need for some higher netting so we pushed the Council for better screening. In time for the new season, the boundary netting has been raised on the South side of the ground which will greatly reduce the chance of this happening again.

Cllr John Sargeant

MPWRA MEETINGS - ALL WELCOME

Meetings are at **8pm** at **MERTON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Entrance from Erridge Road Playground Gate
Each meeting includes time for questions to your Ward Councillors

Sunday 3 June 12 - 5pm	MERTON PARK 'BIG JUBILEE LUNCH' St Mary's Glebe Field 12 – 5pm Free Tickets – call/text 07980337502 Or email: c_stutt@yahoo.co.uk	4 September	Merton Mencap's Work on Learning Disability - Andrew Whittington, Chief Executive
5 June	NO MEETING (Queen's Jubilee Holiday)	2 October	Our Fire Service - Jeff Lisle, Station Manager, Wimbledon Fire Station
3 July	AGM The Wandle Trust - Erica Evans, Company Secretary	6 November	Plans for Wimbledon House School - Casterbridge Nurseries (<i>to be confirmed</i>)
7 August	NO MEETING	4 December	Councillors' Question Timeand seasonal treats!

MPWRA Officers

Chairman: Harold Forbes 020 8540 3314
Vice Chairman: Graham Clark 020 8542 9101
Secretary: Christine Stutt 020 8543 6843
Treasurer: Fred Rayner

MPWRA Committee

Desé Child Edward Foley Pauline Southgate
Hubert Child Jolanta Nowak Paul Wood
Philippa Foskett Judy Sargeant
Ian Garbett David Slocombe

www.mertonpark.org.uk

Email: mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk