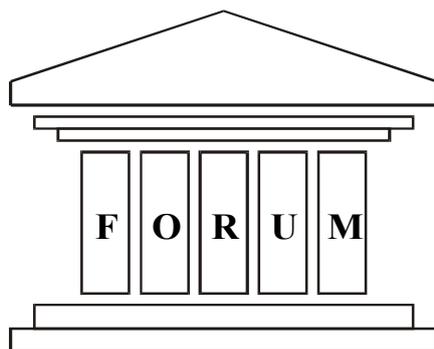


MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



June 2014

Issue No 51

Welcome to this special edition of FORUM following the recent local council elections, including the full results for Merton Park Ward. Two out of every three voters supported the Independents, assuring them of an overwhelming majority and delivering the best result since the Independents first stood for election 24 years ago.



So, thank you for expressing your confidence in our Independent councillors once again. This time round, we were struck by the strength of your support for councillors who are independent. You want councillors for Merton Park Ward who live locally and are accountable to you, rather than owing allegiance to any national political party. Local government should be about local issues and some of the important concerns you raised on the doorstep during the

election campaign are discussed on page 4. I know our Independent councillors will do their utmost to represent your concerns to the Council. On page 3 you can also read about the roles they undertake on Merton Council, working with councillors from all parties to make Merton a good place to live and work.

If you are not already a member of MPWRA, now is the time to consider joining. MPWRA depends on our residents alone to fund our communications and activities, and in an election year we spend more than our income. A membership form is enclosed and you can also pay and join online.

Whether or not you are a member, please keep in touch with your comments and feedback. Come along to our monthly meetings, read FORUM, sign up for our email alerts mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk, visit our website www.mertonpark.org.uk and follow our councillors on Twitter @EdwardFoley and @SargeantJohn

Harold Forbes, Chairman

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

Edward Foley (edward.foley@merton.gov.uk) – 10 Watery Lane SW20 9AD – 020 8542 5824

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

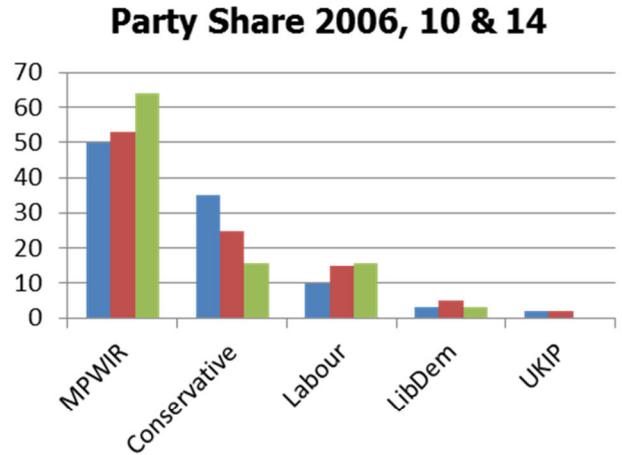
Peter Southgate (peter.southgate@merton.gov.uk) – 22 Dorset Road SW19 3HA – 020 8542 2053

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BEST EVER WIN FOR INDEPENDENTS IN MERTON PARK

Merton Park Ward Independent Residents (MPWIR) scored the most convincing win in their seven successive election victories, when they took 64% of the vote to retain Merton Park Ward in elections to Merton Council on 22 May. This is a significant increase on the 53% share they achieved in 2010, when local elections coincided with the general election. Turnout was 47.4% in Merton Park, well above the 41% for Merton as a whole.

Candidate	Party	Votes	%
John Sargeant	MPWIR	2123	22
Peter Southgate	MPWIR	2052	21
Edward Foley	MPWIR	2047	21
David Cotterrill	Conservative	566	6
Anthony Draper	Labour	552	6
Robert Lawrence	Conservative	520	5
Nicholas Bustin	Conservative	516	5
Ross Savill	Labour	496	5
Charles Ocansey	Labour	495	5
Duncan Burch	Liberal Democrat	143	1
John Dalton	Liberal Democrat	143	1
Nazir Malik	Liberal Democrat	115	1



Support for MPWIR has soared over the last two elections, largely at the expense of the Conservatives who have seen their share of the vote halved since 2006. Labour and Conservatives are now level, each with a 16% share. LibDems trail a distant fourth on 3%. (No UKIP candidate stood in Merton Park this time.)

Labour gained eight seats to win outright control in Merton with 36 seats, against 20 for the Conservatives, 3 MPWIR and one LibDem. In the last council Labour ran a minority administration with 28 seats and MPWIR held the balance of power. While we remained Independent and never entered into a coalition with Labour, we did ensure the council met its legal obligation to set a balanced budget each year.

The *Wimbledon Guardian* (28 May) suggests MPWIR *will be less significant political players now Labour no longer needs their votes to pass decisions through council* but we will continue to adopt a responsible approach to decision-making in council, whether we hold the balance of power or not. We have never believed that adversarial party politics in the council chamber is the best way of making decisions; we prefer to rely on evidence and reasoned argument.

We will have to wait and see how far the Leader of the Council's election night pledge to run an inclusive administration is borne out in practice, but I have been asked to continue chairing the influential Overview & Scrutiny Commission. This matters, because the role of the Commission is to review the policies and challenge the decisions of the administration, so to be credible, it must be independently chaired.

Cllr Peter Southgate



Pictured left, campaign team members present at the count. The photo was taken at 7am just after the result had been announced – it had been a long night but the outcome was worth waiting for.

Just right of centre is Karin Forbes, retiring after eight years much-valued service as an Independent councillor.

YOUR LOCAL INDEPENDENT RESIDENT WARD COUNCILLORS

MPWIR councillors continue to play a full role in the work of the council and the community, with appointments to the following key committees and outside bodies:



Edward Foley

- Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel
- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel (substitute)
- Morden Community Forum
- Merton Park Ward Safer Neighbourhoods Team Panel
- Ricards School (Governor)



John Sargeant

- Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel
- Overview & Scrutiny Commission (substitute)
- Planning Applications Committee (substitute)
- Licensing Committee
- Merton Safer Neighbourhood Board
- Morden Community Forum
- Morden Local Multi-Agency Problem-Solving Group
- Mayor of Merton's Charities (Chair)



Peter Southgate (Leader MPWIR)

- Overview & Scrutiny Commission (Chair)
- Planning Applications Committee
- Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Substitute)
- Local Government Association
- Morden Community Forum
- Merton and Morden Guild of Social Services
- AMA Liaison Group (Chair)
- Merton Park Primary School (Governor)

Former councillor **Krysia Williams** has kindly agreed to continue to represent MPWIR on the Merton Priory Homes Board.

Other members of the MPWRA are also governors in local schools and sit on local committees and working groups.

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TAKING ON THE LESSONS FROM THE DOORSTEP

Many people told us how happy they are to be living in Merton Park. They enjoy the quality of life but also belonging to an open, inclusive and welcoming community. And that's how MPWIR wants it to stay. Of course, they raised some problems and two issues stand out.

Many parents are anxious over **primary school places**. Demand for places is far outstripping supply at Merton Park, Wimbledon Chase and Poplar Primary schools. We want to provide a primary school place for every child in the ward who wants it, within walking distance of their homes. A new Free School opens in our Ward this September and this is potentially good news. Rachel Jacob, the Executive Principal, will speak at our MPWRA meeting on 7 October.

Traffic and parking concerned many residents, especially rat-running through our narrow roads during peak times. It's a growing problem and not confined to Merton Park. There is no simple solution but we are working on several issues including (1) emergency access restricted by parked cars in **Cranleigh and Tybenham Roads**. In May we brought in a fire engine to check the problem. We are waiting for the fire service report before taking next steps; (2) we have arranged for speed tests in **Mostyn Road** to gauge the size of the speeding problem there; (3) the need for safer pedestrian and cycling routes and restraining rat-running in the south of the ward, particularly **Kenley Road, Windermere and Grasmere Avenues**, discussed at the May MPWRA meeting.

Residents expressed few concerns about crime and safety on the doorstep. However, we did identify the need to improve fencing between **The Holt** in **London Road** and **Queen Elizabeth Gardens** to prevent walk-through crime. This is now receiving attention.

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

- 1 July** **Annual General Meeting** and
Leisure services in Merton
Chris Parsloe, LBM and Guardian Newspaper Public Servant of the Year
- AUGUST** **NO MEETING**
- 2 September** *Bringing together GP services, in-patient and out-patient care*
Adele Williams, Healthwatch Merton
- 7 October** *Park Community School (Free School) opening in Dorset Road*
Rachel Jacob, Executive Principal
- 4 November** *A Sports Centre for Morden Park (Proposal by Morden Park Playing Fields Community Trust)*
Speaker (tbc) from MPPFCT
- 2 December** Councillors' Question Time – *and seasonal treats!*

MPWRA Officers

Chairman: Harold Forbes 020 8540 3314
Vice Chairman: Edward Foley 020 8946 2930
Secretary: Christine Stutt 020 8543 6843
Treasurer: Fred Rayner

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MPWRA Committee

Janet Broadmore Graham Clark Judy Sargeant
Desé Child Ian Garbett David Slocombe
Hubert Child Jolanta Nowak Pauline Southgate
Philippa Foskett