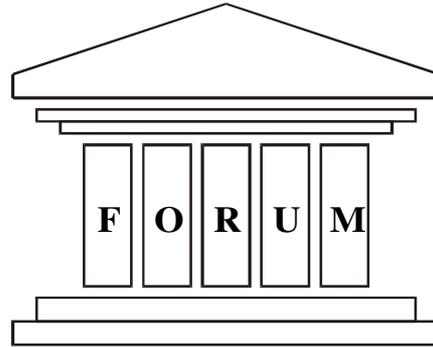


MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Spring 2017

Issue No 57

In this issue of FORUM

- Page 2
- Morden Town Centre
 - A Property Company for Merton
 - Parking at Morden Hall Park
- Page 3
- Morden's Northern Line Depot
 - Diesel Surcharge
 - Controlled Parking Zone MP2
 - Armed Forces Day 24 June
 - Primary School Places
- Page 4
- Wheelie Bins
 - Policing and Crime Prevention
 - London's Police Command Structure
- Page 5
- Poplar Scooter Park
 - Crossrail2 and Wimbledon Masterplan
 - CCTV
- Page 6
- John Innes Path
 - Future Meetings

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This is not an Election Communication!

Unexpectedly, this FORUM will be delivered during the run-up to a General Election; an election for candidates to become MPs in Westminster. For those of you who do not know us already, MPWRA exists to back your Independent Residents Councillors on Merton Council and to keep you informed of local issues. We have never sought to field a candidate to become an MP. London Boroughs will be holding Local Elections in 2018.

The absence of party politics and the ability to judge issues on their merits has been the hallmark of MPWRA and its Councillors since we started in 1989. It enables people of differing party allegiances nationally to work together for the good of their local area.

Our next meeting is at Poplar Primary School, Poplar Road South on Tuesday 6 June at 8pm. Paul McGarry, Head of Future Merton will update us on the far-reaching regeneration plans for Morden. Everyone is welcome.

If you are not already a member, please consider joining (visit www.mertonpark.org.uk). Your subscriptions help us with the costs of these meetings, of FORUM and of course, with election costs. Offers of help, particularly at election time next year would be greatly appreciated.

Hubert Child, 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



Peter Southgate

peter.southgate@merton.gov.uk
22 Dorset Road SW19 3HA
020 8542 2053



John Sargeant

john.sargeant@merton.gov.uk
2 Langley Road SW19 3NZ
020 8542 9361

www.mertonpark.org.uk

mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk

MORDEN TOWN CENTRE

We are devoting our June Meeting to Morden Regeneration. Paul McGarry, Head of Future Merton, will update us on the project, the thinking behind it and explain how we can all get more involved in the decisions which will affect our neighbourhoods for decades to come, for good or ill. The meeting will be held at Poplar Primary School on Tuesday 6 June at 8pm.

There may seem to have been much talk and little action about the regeneration of Morden Town Centre. But behind the scenes there has been intense council activity with TfL, the GLA and others. Now, as Merton's latest update on the project shows, 2017 is going to be a critical year. (Visit www.mertonpark.org.uk for a link to the update.) A developer will be appointed and a public

consultation is planned for this year. An undertaking of this scale (several hundred million pounds) requires some extensive project management and we are pleased that this will include councillor and resident participation.

Merton is currently working closely with TfL to review and model a broad range of transport options. They want to design the best possible approach to deliver a better streetscape for the town centre.

We are not 'starry-eyed' about Morden Regeneration. We recognise it will transform and should reinvigorate the town centre but we shall continue to argue for an outcome that maintains the quality of life for nearby residents.

JS

A PROPERTY COMPANY FOR MERTON

Like other local authorities, Merton Council owns many sites around the borough; some are shops, offices and commercial premises (particularly in Morden) while others are undeveloped land. Council policy has been to sell surplus sites to developers through a competitive bidding process. Although this generates a one-off capital receipt, the council does not benefit financially from the site once developed and capital receipts cannot be used to meet revenue needs, such as adult social care.

As the demand for property to rent is growing strongly, Merton has formed a Local Authority Property Company (LAPC) with the aim of developing its own housing for private rent. Merton's LAPC will start on a modest scale, developing 77 units across four small sites. As well as having sites available to develop, the council can finance their development by borrowing at preferential rates from the Public Work Loans Board (PWLB) and lending on to the LAPC at more commercial rates.

From an investment of £25m into the LAPC for the initial scheme, the council can anticipate revenues of £17m over 30 years and will have an asset worth £50m on maturity. This compares with a capital receipt of £8.2m if the four sites are sold now. Of course, property development is not risk free. But by building to rent rather than to buy, the council is tapping into the sector of the housing market that is showing the strongest growth in Merton.

In the longer run the LAPC could play a key role in the regeneration of Morden town centre, where at least 1,000 flats are planned. Because the LAPC keeps control through build to rent, this ensures the flats will be lived in, not bought and left empty by overseas investors. More than half of Morden town centre is in our ward, so as councillors we want to see thriving communities being created, not ghost towns. The Morden development will include 26% affordable housing units, but these will be sold to a registered provider to manage, as the council no longer has any social housing stock of its own.

While the LAPC gives the council more control than simply selling the sites to a developer, it will also require careful management to balance the financial risk and to build housing that will be an asset to Morden in the future. (Visit www.mertonpark.org.uk for links to more detailed information.)

PS

In common with many other National Trust locations, parking at Morden Hall Park is to be metered. The car park is often full, especially with commuters, preventing visitors from finding a space. National Trust members will be able to swipe their membership card at a pay and display machine to obtain a ticket for up to five hours free parking. Non-members will be able to obtain a ticket for 90 minutes free parking and pay £1.50 per hour for additional time. The Trust at Morden Hall Park assures us that any monies raised through car parking charges after costs will go towards the upkeep of the Park.

MORDEN'S NORTHERN LINE DEPOT – MAJOR DEVELOPMENT



To improve the frequency of trains on the Northern Line, TfL are planning major works for **Morden Depot in the south of our ward**. This will enable an increase in the number of trains which can be stabled there and the installation of a new signalling system. Site works are scheduled to start in January 2018 and will take over a year to complete. Fitting the works around the Mosque, housing and schools in the area will present a challenge. Our councillors have been discussing the plans with TfL and met them at the depot in May. There will be an update at our June meeting at Poplar School. **JS**

DIESEL SURCHARGE

Merton is introducing a hefty surcharge on annual CPZ fees for owners of diesel vehicles. **The surcharge will add £90 in 2017/2018, £115 in 2018/19 rising to the full £150 in 2019/20 on top of the £65 permit cost.** This is far higher than the surcharges for diesel cars in other London boroughs - £10 in Camden, £19 in Kensington and Chelsea and £96 in Islington.

We have argued in council debates and scrutiny meetings that the administration should follow the lead of the Mayor of London and several other international cities. They are announcing future measures but giving motorists time to switch to other fuels. By contrast Merton's surcharge starts this year. **It will be seen as a blatant revenue-raising measure.** Many motorists are locked into leasing deals and others have bought diesel cars in recent years responding to Government incentives.

To be crystal clear, **we believe air-quality in general and diesel-related pollution in particular are major concerns for Merton.** The "excess" deaths caused by toxic fumes across London are truly shocking. But it would be far better to give motorists a reasonable time to change vehicles. Better still to base charges on vehicle usage rather than ownership. We are pushing the council to introduce measures that will have a real beneficial impact – and restore Merton's reputation.

JS

CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE MP2

Residents submitted a petition in late 2015 to consult on a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) near the Nelson Health Centre. Merton conducted an informal consultation last September/October. Based on the results (available on Merton's website) a formal CPZ consultation was held from January to March this year for **Cannon Hill Lane, Bakers End, Cleveland Avenue and Manor Road to form a MP2 CPZ and for Leafield Road to join the existing MP1 which it borders.** The Cabinet member for Highways is expected to decide on the schemes very soon.

During the consultation, it became evident that parking conditions in **Watery Lane** fell well below the standard required for safe access of emergency vehicles. A draft plan of predominantly double yellow lines was prepared. Our councillors engaged in a series of meetings with council officers to find ways to increase the parking provision above the council's original minimal proposal.

MP2 and the diesel surcharge: The slightly good news is that Merton seems to have heard some of our arguments in the council's scrutiny panel. They have announced that CPZs recently consulted upon but not yet implemented will not immediately be subject to a surcharge, as residents were not made aware of the levy during the consultation process. When, as expected, the **MP2 CPZ** does come into operation, residents with diesel cars will not face the new surcharge until 2018/19.

JS

Armed Forces Day Parade Saturday 24 June

This year's parade will begin at Merton Civic Centre at 10am (assemble 9.45am) and proceed down London Road to St Lawrence's Church near South Thames College where a service will be held.

Members of the Royal British Legion, Army cadets, Air Training Corps, Scouts, Police Cadets and other organisations will meet to pay respect to past and present members of the armed forces.

Primary School Places: Merton offered a Reception place for September to every child in the borough who applied for one.

- 80.8% were offered their first choice (80.4% last year)
- 90.9% achieved one of their top three schools (90.1% last year)
- 94.1% were offered one of their preferred schools (93.7% last year)

WHEELIE BINS

Over the past several years we have taken every opportunity to voice Merton Park residents' strong opposition to the introduction of wheelie bins. But despite considerable opposition, the council is going ahead with the new scheme from October 2018. Veolia have been contracted to run the service across Merton, Sutton, Kingston and Croydon who together form the South London Waste Partnership.

We foresee many difficulties for the new collection service which we have explained before in FORUM, including the upfront cost to the council, the inconvenience of storing so many bins and the sheer clutter that will result in streets with limited frontages. Some problems were vividly illustrated at the beginning of April when Sutton introduced exactly the same arrangements as we shall

experience in 18 months' time. Sensing all might not run smoothly, I arranged to spend time with the Veolia teams in Sutton this summer. This will enable me to see the system at first hand, checking in particular how it deals with the bins of older or disabled people and limited storage space. Mid-year should be long enough after the start of the service to learn some lessons and identify issues Merton itself will need to address.

I shall be reporting back my observations to a council scrutiny panel but will also share my findings with MPWRA. **We remain sceptical and opposed to the scheme but believe that at this stage we can be more useful as critical observers, as the council shows no sign of changing its mind.**

JS

POLICING AND CRIME PREVENTION IN MERTON PARK

A second dedicated ward officer, PC James Brevitt has joined PC John Weatherhead and PCSO Nigel Sanders on the Merton Park team. You can follow the team on Twitter [@MPSMertonPark](#). All 20 Merton wards are to have two dedicated officers by the end of May. In addition, three problem-solving teams, each consisting of a sergeant and ten constables, will focus on neighbourhood crime in Mitcham, Morden and Wimbledon.

Whilst Merton Park Ward remains one of the safest wards in the third safest borough in Greater London, some crimes have increased sharply in the last year (to mid-March 2017). Residential burglaries are up 15% in Merton and our ward has experienced more than its fair share. (This increase is evident across London, it is not restricted to Merton).

The appointment of a second ward officer for Merton Park is welcome news but you can reduce the chances of an intruder getting into your home by anticipating how he might try to break in. Rear gardens provide relative seclusion for burglars to force kitchen doors and patio

windows, so make sure your garden fences are in good repair, preferably topped with trellis which will collapse under a burglar's weight if he attempts to climb over. Grow something spikey on the trellis as an additional deterrent. **If you would like individual advice on how to protect the weak points in your home, contact the Merton Park Safer Neighbourhood Team: mertonpark.snt@met.police.uk or phone 020 8721 2451.** They would always prefer to tell you how to stop a burglar getting in, than to visit you after the event to tell you how he did get in.

One category of crime where the Merton Park SNT will not be able to help you is cybercrime - identity theft, on-line scams, fraud and deception. Perpetrators of cybercrime could be anywhere in the world, so Action Fraud is the national reporting centre for fraud and internet crime; the National Fraud Authority is a branch of the Home Office. Anyone who has been a victim of internet fraud or crime should report it to www.actionfraud.police.uk Specialist advisers are available on 0300 1232040 if you need more support.

PS

CHANGES TO LONDON'S POLICE COMMAND STRUCTURE

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) currently appoints a Borough Commander to each of London's 32 boroughs. However, pressures to cut costs are behind proposals to amalgamate the boroughs into 12 Base Command Units (BCUs). Two pilot areas, one combining Barking and Dagenham, Redbridge and Havering, the other Camden and Islington, were introduced in January this year.

The proposal for Merton is to combine with Kingston, Richmond and Wandsworth to form a four borough BCU.

While this might seem large, BCUs are configured on the levels of crime they expect to deal with; three of these boroughs rank amongst the safest in London. The fourth (Wandsworth) has a higher crime rate relative to population but below that of Croydon. **Policing the larger BCU has its advantages; 999 calls will go to the nearest response unit and suspects will be pursued regardless of boundaries.** Since criminals do not respect borough boundaries, sharing intelligence will help to identify similar patterns of activity across the BCU, improving arrest rates.

PS

POPLAR SCOOTER PARK

Six years ago, the council decided to expand Poplar Primary School from two forms of entry to three, to cater for the sharp increase in demand for primary school places. The only foreseeable downside was that 50% more children would have to share the same amount of recreational space if no measures were taken to expand the total space available.



There is also a small village area with pretend garage and shops for role play. MPWRA members organised a collection and donated a bench for the planned natural area which will be planted with bluebells, snowdrops and spring bulbs.

So we were fully supportive when the school enquired about taking over a little used and derelict corner of Mostyn Gardens adjacent to its playground, to restore for shared use. Pupils would get extra recreational space during school hours, while the community would gain from an upgraded open space at all other times.

The idea of a scooter park was born when the Headteacher, Katharine Davies, noticed that many children came to school on scooters, and persuaded her husband, a professional graphic designer, to design the layout for the park. It has more than 200 metres of undulating pathways, with road markings and signage so that the children can learn how to use public roads safely.

The scooter park was launched at the end of March by the Mayor. The enthusiasm of the children was evident as they ran and scooted in their own duathlon to raise cash to complete it. The scooter park cost an initial £60,000, with the school raising £30,000 and the SUEZ Communities Trust donating a further £30,000. Then children, parents, Merton Park residents, Merton council, Morden businesses and local organisations joined together to raise the £20,000 needed to finish the scooter park. We think this is a great example of what the community can achieve when all the key players identify a shared goal and pursue it with determination and enthusiasm. And the scooter park will be open for everyone to use outside school hours – take your children and your grandchildren, if your own scooting days are past.

PS

CROSSRAIL2....

There has been very little public evidence of progress to **Crossrail2** since our last edition of FORUM. The follow-up consultation which promised to seek views on revised route options in 2016 failed to appear. We now understand that until the business case is settled no consultation will be held, most likely pushing it into the second half of this year. Although the scheme is very much in the development phase, it is still expected that the Crossrail2 tunnel would emerge at Wimbledon. Work would commence in the early 2020s with completion in the early 2030s. Merton's own cross-party comments to Crossrail2 made clear that the original proposals for Wimbledon were unacceptable.

....AND WIMBLEDON MASTERPLAN

Crossrail2 delays have reduced our previous concerns that the scheme was running ahead of Merton's own need to create a **masterplan for Wimbledon**. This is intended to guide planning, development and investment decisions in the town centre for the next 15 years. During February and March the council held workshops for residents and businesses to get involved in the process of shaping the masterplan. Many MPWRA members and our independent councillors attended. The interactive sessions enabled residents to discuss and record the opportunities and issues facing Wimbledon and the future direction the town centre should take. A full consultation report of the workshops will be published soon and will be accessible through our website, along with the next steps in the masterplan process.

JS

CCTV

For some time, we have been campaigning for CCTV to be installed in Kendor Gardens, between Kenley Road and Dorset Road and in John Innes Recreation Ground near the pavilion.

Our request has not yet been granted because relatively few formal complaints have been made. But Safer Merton has promised us a programme of engagement with residents. This will include:

- direct contact with all residents with specific complaints to understand and log incidents;
- letters to all households near Kendor Gardens asking them to contact LBM or the Met on specific issues;
- increased enforcement presence over the next few months, especially regarding drugs and alcohol.

Given the limited number of cameras available to the borough, the current lack of evidence prevents us from having CCTV installed at this stage but we hope these agreed steps will help us secure some cameras soon.

JS

We are disappointed to report that the new John Innes path has still not been constructed. The path will provide an alternative route between the Park and the Recreation Ground via Watery Lane when the current path is closed during the school day, to improve security of the Rutlish School site.

Planning permission was delayed by the need to gain approval from the Department for Communities and Local Government, as well as Merton's own conservation officer. It was finally granted on 8 March. When officers met with the contractor at the end of March and projected forward the 4-6 weeks needed for the delivery of fencing materials, they realised that noisy ground works would be taking place in the middle of GCSE and 'A' level exams, close by the exam hall. So, the start of work on site has been delayed to 3 July, when exams will be over. It will be completed in August, ready for the autumn term.

The new path comes out of the Park through an old gated arch in the Grade II listed wall that surrounds the Manor House to join the pavement on Watery Lane in front of Rutlish School. It enters the Rec at the far end of the school frontage; both access paths will be levelled to 1:20 to ensure easy use for wheelchairs and buggies.

The current path will be available during the school holidays when construction of the new path is taking place, but for the summer term users will still have to make their way along Church Path and Watery Lane during the school day when the path is closed. **This is not just inconvenient, it is also dangerous where pedestrians and cars must share the narrow section of Watery Lane. The new path can't come a moment too soon.**

You can read the full report on our website www.mertonpark.org.uk and under reference 16/P4141 on Planning Explorer at www.merton.gov.uk . **PS**

**Next meeting:
Tuesday 6 June, 8pm at Poplar Primary School, Poplar Road South
Morden Regeneration – Paul McGarry, Future Merton, LBM**

**MPWRA's regular meeting day at Merton Park Primary School is changing
to the first Wednesday of each month.**

Meetings start **at 8pm**, usually with an outside speaker on a topic of local interest. Tea, coffee and biscuits are available during a short break before your three Independent councillors give their reports and answer any questions from the audience. There is also a neighbourhood police report. Meetings finish by 10pm.

**Our AGM will be at Merton Park School on Wednesday 5 July at 8pm, followed by:
Healthcare Services beyond 2020 –
Lisa Thomson, Director of Communications, Epsom and St Helier Hospitals NHS Trust**

You will find more details of future meetings on our website www.mertonpark.org.uk
and on posters around the ward

Sign up for our email alerts by emailing mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk

MPWRA Officers

Chairman: Hubert Child 020 8540 3087
Vice Chairman: Bryan Anderson
Secretary: Christine Stutt 020 8543 6843
Treasurer: Fred Rayner

www.mertonpark.org.uk

MPWRA Committee

Desé Child Ian Garbett Judy Sargeant
Graham Clark Stephen Mercer David Slocombe
Philippa Foscett Jolanta Nowak Pauline Southgate

mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk