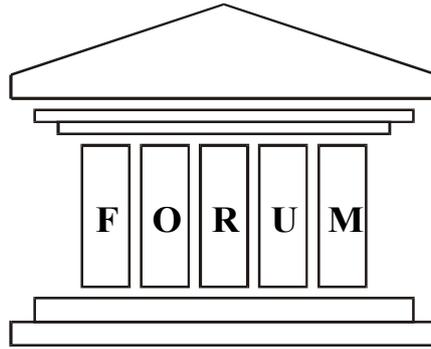


MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION



Spring 2015

Issue No 53

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Tuesday 2 June at 8pm
Poplar Primary School

Councillors' Question Time plus
Regeneration Plans for Morden

Come and find out what's going on where
you live and how it will affect you

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

"The world's favourite season is the spring. All things seem possible in May."

For many people, including me, spring is a magical time of renewal and thinking about the future: anticipation (or sometimes trepidation) of what the summer may hold and whether we will gather sufficient harvest to see us through the inevitable winter that follows.

Living in an urban area like Merton Park it is sometimes easy to forget how dependent we are on the seasons and the planning for the future that goes into each growing season. But the metaphor of reaping what you sow is an apt one for this issue of FORUM. We celebrate reaping the hard work that went into the Nelson redevelopment (p6) and look at some of the big projects where the ground is currently being prepared (Morden Regeneration p3) or actually being planted (Tramlink news p5). We also offer you an opportunity to get involved in some "tending" of the area with a litter pick planned for June 6th (p5) or even to get more involved in the MPWRA! (p2)

All things may seem possible but those that come to fruition are the ones that people put work into so I'd like to encourage you to be actively involved in continuing to make Merton Park a pleasant place to live.

Harold Forbes

Saturday 6 June 10am

Help us in a community litter pick and join us afterwards for a burger and a chat!

Everyone Welcome

see page 5 for more details

sign up by email edward.foley@merton.gov.uk or phone/text 07956 361591

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

www.mertonpark.org.uk

MPWRA – LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



Have you ever thought of becoming a councillor?

Of course not, silly question – petty party politics, all those meetings in the Civic Centre, that's not for me. There's always someone else willing to take care of that in Merton Park.

But nothing lasts forever, and MPWRA will not continue if

new councillors do not come forward to take the place of those retiring in the years ahead. That would be a pity, because in its 25 year history MPWRA has never been more successful than it is now. In the local elections a year ago, MPWRA-sponsored councillors won their highest ever share of the votes cast at 64%, leaving the two main parties trailing on 16% apiece. Our monthly meetings are attracting record audiences (around 100 in April), our email alerts keep more than 500 households up to date with what's going on in Merton Park and all 4,000 households in the Ward receive FORUM, our newsletter, twice a year.

For a one ward party (three councillors out of 60 in Merton) we punch substantially above our weight. First with a minority Conservative administration (2006-10) then a minority Labour administration (2010-14), we held the balance of power on Merton Council for eight years. During that time the Council's performance improved across the board, even as austerity began to bite and more primary school places than ever before had to be found. In 2013 Merton won the Municipal Journal's award for the best achieving council in the country. Your Independent councillors no longer hold the balance of power, but we still retain key posts in planning and scrutiny.

But our driving force has always been what we can achieve in Merton Park Ward, not in the council chamber. The opening of the new Nelson Health Centre is the culmination of years of work by councillors and

local residents – it could so easily have become another derelict NHS site without their commitment. The John Innes (Merton Park) Conservation Area is safeguarded by Article 4 Directions thanks to local action, making it unique amongst Merton's 34 conservation areas. And of course, Merton Park first got Independent councillors when residents rebelled against plans to widen Kingston Road by demolishing historic houses along the route through the Ward. Active communities really can change things, as we proved back then in 1990.

We see plenty more opportunities and challenges ahead for Merton Park and our particular brand of independent local politics. The development focus is shifting towards Morden with the planned regeneration of the town centre. We want to make sure our residents do not suffer but actually gain from this massive project, as redevelopment brings new homes and an improved High Street. Further ahead, Crossrail 2 will have an enormous impact on the area around Wimbledon Station, which we expect to affect households and infrastructure needs as its impact ripples outwards to our Ward. And, in the face of further cuts anticipated to local government funding after the general election, there will be an ongoing need to protect our greenspaces and look after and improve our streetscene in Merton Park.

MPWRA offers a unique opportunity to shape and protect the future of our Ward as a councillor, independent and free from the constraints of national party politics. The challenges will change, and our ways of communicating with residents will no doubt change too. If you relish the prospect of leading the response to these changes, you could have the makings of an effective councillor for Merton Park Ward.

And if you want to contribute to the process, you could play a useful role on the MPWRA committee – perhaps to see at close hand what we councillors get up to. Either way, get in touch with us for a chat.

Cllr Peter Southgate
Leader, MPWIR

MORDEN HALL PARK

The first **National Trust Garden Centre** has been opened in the park. Details of the new venture and other events planned for 2015 can be viewed at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park/.

We have also learned that Morden Hall itself has been let by its owners Whitbread to a hotel company. They plan to market the Hall as a wedding venue.

MORDEN TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION



In late 2013 we reported on outline plans to regenerate Morden Town Centre. You may have taken part in our own consultation at that time on the Planning Brief developed by Merton Council for the Morden Station site. We said, ***“Make no mistake, this is a big project that will transform the look and feel of much of the Town Centre.”*** In fact, it’s getting bigger; a classic example of why we need a strong representation on the Council to uphold residents’ interests.

We recently met council officers to check on progress. The plans now fall into three categories:

- 1. Improving Morden’s public spaces and streetscape (sometimes called the Public Realm)** by reviewing the traffic flow through the town centre. To make the town centre more attractive it’s essential to reduce the dominance of through-traffic and create more places for people to enjoy Morden. We need to improve the quality of the high street area. Part of the plan is to remove the gyratory around the Civic Centre, calm traffic and create a new public space at the heart of Morden.
- 2. Residential and commercial development from Morden Station in London Road and northwards** across the car park areas. Merton’s planners are confident that the kind of development described in their 2013 consultation is viable and will generate genuine interest from potential developers. They are working with TfL, who own much of the site, to identify a development partner and secure the necessary funding to proceed. TfL have many development options in the pipeline and hope to announce their development partner by December 2015. The challenge will be to convince TfL they should accelerate Morden in front of many other contending schemes across London.

- 3.** In addition to what was in the 2013 plans, exploring the development potential of the real estate bounded by London Road, Aberconway Road and Morden Hall Road, the so-called **“Abbotsbury Triangle”**, which is mostly within the Council’s freehold ownership.

The potential inclusion of the Abbotsbury Triangle may make a crucial difference. This large addition to the scope for development could bring the total additional housing from Morden redevelopment towards 1,000 units. Regeneration of Morden could be supported by significant investment from the Mayor of London/Greater London Authority (GLA). Merton is bidding for funds from the GLA by applying for Morden to be granted Housing Zone status. The outcome of the bid should be known by the end of May and could provide significant funding to accelerate growth of new housing and to allow the Council to seek a development partner for land which Merton owns.

Preparing to get to the building stage can seem to take an age but given TfL’s current priorities it would have been impossible to progress more quickly. However, we should expect consultation on the public realm proposals by the spring of 2016 and a £9m package of works in 2017. The pace of the other elements of the plans will depend on how soon development funding can be accessed. With GLA funding support, development could move towards specific plans for consultation in late 2016 with development taking place in 2018-2020.

Our **next meeting at Poplar Primary School on 2 June** will be an opportunity to review the Planning Brief and for us all to discuss what we would like to see in the final plans.



Cllr John Sargeant

PARKING CONTROLS – A NECESSARY EVIL?

The growing volumes of traffic passing through our roads in Merton Park pose an increasing problem, made worse when residents, visitors and commuters compete to find parking spaces. Road layouts that may have worked well when houses were built between the wars (1919 – 1939) are often too narrow for the size and numbers of vehicles trying to get through them today. In particular emergency vehicles (fire and ambulance) as well as refuse and delivery vehicles have difficulty getting through when cars are parked on both sides.



Residents in **Keswick Avenue** faced the same problem; it is narrow and impassable if cars are parked on both sides. The solution proposed was for double yellow lines along the west side of the Avenue. Although this won the support of 74% in a survey organised by residents, it was felt to disadvantage those living on the west side. So as an alternative, residents of Keswick Avenue are being asked whether they want to join the CPZ which already operates in the adjacent **Erridge Road**.

Residents in **Cranleigh Road** organised their own survey last year to find a way of improving emergency access and reducing commuter parking. A test run by the fire brigade confirmed that the road was impassable on bends when cars were parked on both sides. At this point legal responsibility for ensuring emergency vehicle access passed to the council, so parking controls in some form became inevitable. A scheme to restrict parking to alternate sides of the road on weekdays found favour with a majority of residents, but presented practical difficulties for those without off street parking – where can you park when you go away for a few days? So at a meeting in February residents agreed to consult on a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) as the more acceptable solution. This promises to safeguard emergency access while restricting parking to permit holders, thus eliminating commuter parking.

It doesn't take a genius to see that the effect of introducing parking controls in these two roads will be to displace vehicles seeking to park onto nearby roads without parking controls – **Kenley, Tybenham, Poplar Road South and Mostyn** south of its junction with Kenley. Tybenham Road shares with Cranleigh its narrow, winding layout making it hazardous during peak hours, and all these roads suffer parking congestion during weekdays.

I am therefore planning a simple survey to find out whether residents in these roads want to be party to the consultation on introducing a CPZ in Cranleigh Road and Keswick Avenue. Let me stress that this is in no way binding; Traffic and Highways will carry out their own official survey if residents want it. But it will allow everyone to see what the level of support is for the consultation in each road.

Cllr Peter Southgate

DEMAND FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES

MPWIR has always aimed to ensure there is a primary place available to every child who wants it at a good or outstanding school within walking distance of their home in Merton Park. Thursday 16 April was the date when anxious parents found out whether their child had been offered a reception place at their preferred choice of primary school. In Merton 81.4% received their first choice; that's 4% up on last year, and above the average for all London boroughs.

high as ever, and exceeds the number of places available by a wide margin.

With the exception of Merton Park (which is constrained by its small site), all of the local primaries have been expanded by one form of entry (30 places) to meet the unprecedented rise in demand caused by a 38% increase in the birth rate. In total, 4,500 extra places have been created in Merton since 2007.

School	Places	1st choice	1 st – 3 rd choices
Wimbledon Chase	90	165	367
Dundonald	60	85	364
Merton Park	30	32	135
Poplar	90	81	175
Joseph Hood	60	30	64

Park Community School, the new free school currently in temporary premises in Crown Lane, is set to move to a permanent home in the former Tyndale House at the south end of Dorset Road this September. It has got off to a slow start against the established primaries, all of which are rated "Good" or "Outstanding" by Ofsted. However, Rachel Jacob, executive head, tells me they now have 42 acceptances for September, leaving 18 places on offer to Merton children.

Cllr Peter Southgate

Parents in Merton Park could be forgiven if they found the upbeat figures hard to believe. As the table shows, demand for the most popular local schools remains as

MORE TRAMS COMING TO WIMBLEDON



Much has happened since our MPWRA meeting in June 2013 when Tramlink last spoke to our residents. 14,000 Tramlink passengers use Wimbledon every weekday; anyone who regularly joins the tram at Merton Park or Morden Road will know the service is crammed full. So when your Independent councillors met TfL earlier this year they were keen to hear what progress TfL is making to expand capacity.

TfL plans to ease congestion by running 12 trams an hour (tph) instead of the current 8. This entails three separate projects:

- Twin tracking the existing single track between Mitcham Junction and Beddington Lane, the next stop to the east. (completed Autumn 2014)
- Adding a platform at Wimbledon Station (Platform 10). (This will be completed Autumn 2015)
- Buying four new Stadler trams. These are similar to the six Stadler trams introduced in 2011.

But increasing the frequency of trams crossing the Kingston Road by 50% poses a mighty challenge. Congestion is already heavy every day at the junction with Hartfield Road. To solve the problem TfL proposes altering traffic light phasing and making minor changes to the road layout. Their transport models actually show there will be slightly less congestion with 12 tph than there is with the current 8 tph in each direction.

However the proposals also include banning left turns out of Hartfield Road. We are challenging TfL to see if this aspect of the scheme is critical, so that disruption to motorists and local residents can be minimised.

Cllr John Sargeant

LITTER! LITTER! LITTER!

According to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) there has been an increase of 20% in fly-tipping and fast food litter in the last year. And I know from personal experience walking my dog how much litter there is in Merton Park. Most days I seem to pick up rubbish and it's often from people dropping coffee cups, food wrappers and cans rather than taking them home or using a bin.

At the April MPWRA meeting I asked if there was interest in a **community litter pick** for a few hours on a Saturday and received support from some of the residents. We have chosen **Saturday 6 June** as the date and will be meeting at the **John Innes Car Park in Mostyn Road at 10am**. Merton Council will be providing the equipment and we are planning at the moment to walk through both John Innes Park and Mostyn Gardens to pick up as much litter as we can. These were two spots that were highlighted by the residents that night. **If you know any other spots that you think would benefit** then please contact me edward.foley@merton.gov.uk. Please try and join us if you can, if only for an hour. The more help we have the better.

We will aim to finish by 12.30 back in the car park where the rubbish sacks will be collected by Merton Council. **Harold Forbes has kindly offered lunchtime refreshments** in his garden opposite the

car park afterwards for **everyone taking part**, so please let us know you're coming!

Email edward.foley@merton.gov.uk or phone/text 07956 361591

Many of you may have a smart phone but may not be familiar yet with an app called **Love Clean Streets**. It is free to download and simple and easy to use to report any litter and other street issues including, for example, potholes. When the app is opened it pinpoints your position accurately, using GPS. You can then upload or take a photo of the litter, graffiti or fly tip and a drop down menu gives you a choice to narrow down the problem further. I have been using the app for the past three months and have found it very easy to use. The best part is a notification to tell you what is happening. If you have a smart phone I recommend downloading it today and trying it out.

If you don't have a smart phone, you can still phone 020 8274 4902 or use the Merton Council website to report the litter or fly tip.



Cllr Edward Foley

THE NELSON HEALTH CENTRE IS OPEN

Many local residents and your councillors attended the ceremony when the new Nelson Health Centre opened at the beginning of April. We've received many positive and enthusiastic comments from both patients and staff in its first weeks of operation. The Centre offers a range of outpatient clinics provided by St George's Hospital, who will also run several diagnostic and other community services. It will be managed by a consortium (Community Health Partnership) which is a wholly owned NHS subsidiary.

The Cannon Hill Lane and Church Lane GP surgeries have relocated to this new site, forming a single **Nelson Medical Practice**. Residents who were previously patients at either practice have been automatically registered with the new practice. You do not need to complete a new patient registration form but may find it's well worth visiting their new website www.nelsonmedicalpractice.co.uk to see what they offer. Their telephone number is 020 3668 3400. Dr Martyn Wake, formerly of the Church Lane Practice, addressed our April meeting where around 100 residents heard about the new arrangements. The former Church Lane Surgery site has been sold and we understand it will become a day nursery.

Next door to the Nelson, the **McCarthy & Stone Care Home** is progressing. It will provide Assisted Living with Extra Care. There were some construction delays over the winter as a Thames Water sewer had to be diverted around the rear of the site; these works are now completed. McCarthy & Stone's website states that apartments will be available to purchase off-plan from this autumn and the first homeowners are expected to move in next spring.

Cllr John Sargeant

MPWRA MEETINGS - ALL WELCOME

Meetings are at **8pm** at **MERTON PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL (except the June meeting)**

Entrance from Erridge Road Playground Gate

Each meeting includes time for questions to your Ward Councillors

- 2 June** Councillors' Question Time at **Poplar Primary School**
- including *Morden Regeneration Plans*
- 7 July** **AGM** followed by *Merton Priory*
John Hawks – Merton Priory Trust
- AUGUST** **NO MEETING**
- 1 September** *Merton at 50: An A – Z*
Sarah Gould – Manager, Heritage and Local Studies at LBM
- 6 October** *The Care Act 2014*
Dan Short – interim Head of Redesign at LBM
- 3 November** *Merton's Dementia Hub*
Rahat Ahmed-Man – Head of Access and Commissioning, LBM
- 2 December** Councillors' Question Time – *and seasonal treats!*

MPWRA Officers

Chairman: Harold Forbes 020 8540 3314
Vice Chairman: Bryan Anderson
Secretary: Christine Stutt 020 8543 6843
Treasurer: Fred Rayner

MPWRA Committee

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

www.mertonpark.org.uk