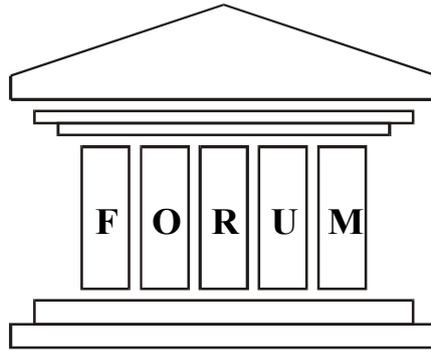


MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



Spring 2009

Issue No 39

Merton Park Ward Residents Association (MPWRA) sponsors your Independent councillors as Merton Park Ward Independent Residents (MPWIR) on Merton Council

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MPWRA – WHO ARE WE AND WHY IT'S WORTH JOINING

What is it?

Formed in 1990, MPWRA is a Residents Association which works to protect and improve the local environment and local services. Anyone who lives in the ward can join. We are all volunteers

Why do we need it?

Before the Association was set up, ward councillors did not always listen or respond to the views of residents. This dissatisfaction led to the formation of MPWRA.

What does it do?

It sponsors Independent Resident councillors who meet regularly with local residents. They use their influence on Merton Council in the interests of the local community.

When does it meet?

MPWRA meets on the first Tuesday of each month (except January and August) at Merton Park Primary School at 8pm.

Who goes?

The Independent Resident councillors, the committee of the Association and local residents.

What happens at meetings?

Our councillors report on matters of interest from Council business, answer questions and discuss issues with residents. Guest speakers give talks on subjects of local importance.

Why should I join?

To demonstrate your support for what the MPWRA does and, through your membership subscription (£5 a year), contribute to the cost of what we do, such as printing and delivering FORUM to every household in the ward, renting Merton Park School Hall for monthly meetings and running the website.

How do I join?

Fill in the enclosed form or download one from our website. *Current members - you can check if your membership is due for renewal by phoning 8542 2053 or emailing membership@mertonpark.org.uk*

We have a new website: www.mertonpark.org.uk bringing you essential news and information about Merton Park Ward. Now you can also read FORUM on your computer. It is still delivered to every house in the Ward but by looking at our newsletter on the web, you get the details behind the stories, plus pictures, commentary and links to other relevant websites. See story updates and details of your Independent Ward Councillors. Log on and contact us to tell us what you think and what's on your mind! (For example, you can email us your questions to speakers and councillors before our meetings.)

John Sargeant

20 MPH LIMIT IN MERTON PARK – WHAT ABOUT CANNON HILL LANE?

More accidents involving personal injuries have occurred at the junction of Cannon Hill Lane and Manor Road, than in the whole of the new Merton Park 20 mph limit area. So when the final plans for the new speed limit in Merton Park were published in December, we were surprised to find that Cannon Hill Lane had been **excluded** from the proposed area.

I wrote immediately to the Traffic Engineer pointing out that, in view of its accident record, it would be madness to exclude Cannon Hill Lane. However, I was told that it could not be included because the statutory consultation had closed. We felt strongly that once an accident black spot had been identified it should be subject to remedial measures to improve safety, before any more pedestrians (principally school children) got hurt. So we carried out our own consultation.

We distributed questionnaires to households in Cannon Hill Lane, Bakers End, Cleveland Avenue and Manor Road. A total of 33 replied - a response rate of 25%. We would like to thank all of you who took the trouble to reply. Please see our website for residents' comments.

The overwhelming majority favour the introduction of a 20 mph speed limit. Cannon Hill Lane is quite different from other roads in Merton Park; it is narrow, heavily parked and motorists experience poor sight lines around blind bends.

The main complaint is that traffic travels too fast for these dangerous conditions, giving rise to fears for children crossing to the park or to Rutlish School. Alarming, a minority of residents had direct experience of accidents on Cannon Hill Lane, either as victims or witnesses. This is in stark contrast to the rest of Merton Park, where our consultation did not identify anyone who had suffered injury as the result of a traffic accident. Cannon Hill Lane residents also reported frequent damage to wing mirrors from passing cars.

The results of this consultation bear out the traffic accident statistics – action is needed urgently to control speeding traffic on Cannon Hill Lane and improve pedestrian safety at the accident black spot junction with Manor Road. Residents know best what is needed in their roads, and we will be pressing Merton Council to introduce a 20 mph limit on Cannon Hill Lane without delay.

Cllr Peter Southgate

MY YEAR AS DEPUTY MAYOR

When I was invited to be Deputy Mayor of Merton, it was an unexpected honour and I was, to be honest, bowled over.

And I've continued to be bowled over all year, visiting people who work so hard to enhance the lives of their fellow citizens... a pantomime in a Morden primary school, which has involved and united the community for over 25 years... a concert performance of 'Dirty Dancing' given by adults with learning difficulties for families and friends... charities helping ex-prisoners and drug addicts to find a new path in life... the Friends of St Raphael's Hospice, who spoke eloquently about learning to see death as a natural consequence of life, which can be accepted and eased, for both the patient and their family.

I've seen dedicated volunteers and families in challenging circumstances, whose work is often unseen. There are many successes but there is also a constant need for more volunteers...and for younger volunteers.

What else: I've opened a multi-faith Peace Garden, attended a Peace Symposium with over a 1000

people at the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Merton Park ward; sung at the impromptu 'Burma Concert' at my own church, St Mary's, where £4000 was raised in an evening of fun and music; presided over Citizenship ceremonies; represented the people of Merton at the TA's centenary celebration and the Mayor of London's Remembrance Service and led the elderly members of Mitcham & Morden Guild in music hall songs at their annual supper.

And the greatest lesson? The roles of Mayor and Deputy Mayor are very much appreciated by the people of Merton, and as far as I am concerned, the role is to say **thank you**:

- on behalf of Merton Council, to the many volunteers and working people in Merton who give service to others;
- on behalf of the people of Merton, to celebrate their own achievements and contributions;
- and finally, representing Merton beyond the borough...to the Poppy appeal, the Olympics projects, the TA, the Army... yet again: 'Thank you'

Cllr Krysia Williams

THE 'BABY P' CASE - MERTON'S RESPONSE TO LORD LAMING'S REPORT

The Laming Review, published in March, was commissioned by the Government to look at Children's Services across England. Lord Laming previously led the review of children's services after the tragic death of Victoria Climbié in 2003, which led to *Every Child Matters* and *The Children Act 2004*. The new report reaffirms the *Every Child Matters* approach to safeguarding children but says more must be done to ensure that it is implemented by all services to provide the best quality care and protection for every child.

The Laming Review repeatedly stresses the need for compliance in each partner agency and across multi-agency working. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure that the best responses to safeguarding children are present in their own work, throughout their organisation and promoted when working together.

In Merton there already is a strong multi-agency partnership with lots of integrated working and reference to best practice from other boroughs: many of Lord Laming's recommendations are already being implemented here. However, there is never any room for complacency and in response to the report Merton is looking closely at the structure and membership of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and its relationship with the Merton Children's Trust.

Lord Laming also calls on central government to set explicit priorities for the protection of children and young people with specific targets for all the frontline services, backed by sufficient resources. Merton is committed to following these government priorities and targets when they are announced.

Cllr Karin Forbes

CPZ IN MERTON PARK

The MP1 parking zone now includes the west end of Erridge Road and the southern half of Poplar Road. In both of these sections a substantial majority voted in favour of this extension.

The proposed extension in Circle Gardens is currently in the formal consultation period which closes on 1 May. Just over 80% of Circle Gardens residents voted for this formal consultation; the

result should be known later in May and I will keep residents informed.

A group of Stratton Road residents were concerned about one set of yellow lines that received approval. After I discussed this with the council officers it has been agreed that the implementation of these yellow lines will be delayed for a month or so to see how the 'consequential parking' develops.

Cllr Krysia Williams

REGENERATION OF WIMBLEDON CHASE

Wimbledon Civic Forum hosted a very well attended public meeting at Wimbledon Art College on 18 March, to consider what could be done to improve the Chase area. Tim Day, a local architect, gave a comprehensive and imaginative presentation (available on the website) contrasting the situation now with visual representations of how the area might look.

His proposals and the problems of the area were fully discussed. There were lots of suggestions around seating, street furniture, signage and safety, but the two things that nearly everyone supported were the planting of large shade trees on both sides of the road and the refurbishment of the station, in particular the ugly, graffitied railway bridge.

Merton's Chief Planning Officer was also present. He confirmed that some funds are available to make changes in this area from the Section 106 money that accompanies the current building development. Action will depend on co-operation from the Council, local business and Network Rail. Interestingly, we have just heard that Tesco have applied to build an Express store on the corner of Rothesay Avenue opposite the station.

What is clear from the number of people at the meeting and their enthusiasm, is that Wimbledon Chase can be regenerated and there is the public will to see it through. It would be good to see the tree planting soon, as a memorial to John Ward, who made the suggestion but sadly died later in March. He and his late wife Evelyn, were great contributors to our local community.

Desé Child

WHO WILL BE THE NEXT MAYOR OF MERTON?

Council elects the Mayor of Merton for the coming year at its Annual Council Meeting on 13 May, too late for our FORUM deadline! The voting is finely balanced between Labour and Conservative candidates. You can read frequent updates on this story and the implications for future control of the Council on our website.

Since the last election, Merton Council has been under No Overall Control (NOC). As the largest party, the Conservatives formed the administration, but have been subject to the veto of the Labour mayor's casting vote in council meetings. This system of checks and balances has served Merton well. Your Independent Councillors (MPWIR) have used their control of the balance of power to prevent excesses from either major party. We have always put the long term interests of Merton's residents first.

With NOC the performance of Merton Council has improved. In March the Audit Commission raised its rating to 4* (the highest possible score) with an "improving strongly" outlook. Merton was rated "weak" as recently as 2003.

MPWIR will support the Labour nominee for mayor at the Annual Council Meeting, in the hope of retaining the balance of power and continuing the stable governance that has served Merton well since the last election.

Cllr Peter Southgate

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

5 May	Jonathan Lewis, Senior Planner, London Borough of Merton <i>- Sustainable Design in Conservation Areas</i>
2 June	Chris Frost, Chief Executive, Merton Voluntary Services Council
7 July	AGM
15 September <i>(Note change of date)</i>	New Headteacher, Merton Park Primary School
6 October	Supporting our ageing population
3 November	Leisure facilities in Merton
1 December	Councillors' Question Time.....and mince pies

MPWRA Officers

Chairman:	Hubert Child	020 8540 3087
Vice Chairman:	Graham Clark	020 8542 9101
Secretary:	Christine Stutt	020 8543 6843
Treasurer:	Fred Rayner	

MPWRA Committee

Diana Cairns	John Sargeant
Desé Child	Judy Sargeant
Philippa Foskett	David Slocombe
Ian Garbett	Bridget Smith
Edward Foley	Pauline Southgate
John Nelson-Jones	Paul Wood
Jolanta Nowak	

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