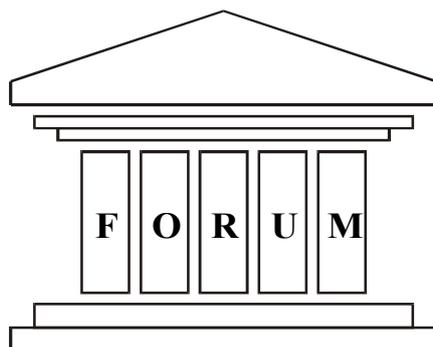


MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



Spring 2010

Issue No 41

ELECTION 6 MAY – WILL YOU BE ABLE TO VOTE? ACT NOW!

Local elections for three councillors to represent you in Merton Park Ward will be held on 6 May – and the general election will probably be held on the same day.

Are you on the Electoral Register?

If you have recently moved into the Ward and did not complete the electoral return in October, you may not be included. Ring us on 020 8542 2053 or email membership@mertonpark.org to check. We will arrange for a registration form to be sent to you.

If you prefer you can ring Electoral Services direct on 020 8545 3407 or email electoralservices@merton.gov.uk

Do you need a postal vote?

If you are likely to be away on 6 May, or would simply find it easier to vote by post and not have to go to the polling station, you can register for a postal vote. Contact us or Electoral Services for the registration form.

But remember – you must apply **before 20 April** to get your name on the Electoral Register, or for a postal vote.

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

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Peter Southgate: peter.southgate@merton.gov.uk 22 Dorset Road SW19 3HA – 020 8542 2053
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Welcome to our Spring edition of Forum. . .

You'll find not just articles on recent developments affecting you but also a progress report on the priorities which the MPWRA set for our Independent Ward Councillors last summer. You will see how busy they have been on our behalf. The map on page 3 shows our councillors have been active all over the Ward, which extends from Morden Town Centre to Wimbledon Chase.

Reading through the reports, it really demonstrates the value there is in having independent councillors, all of whom live in the Ward. They work constructively with other parties where they can and never oppose for opposition's sake. But when necessary they take a stand to get the right deal for residents. Independents will always put Merton Park Ward and its residents first, using their votes in Council to achieve that. As Independents, they can do so without pressure from national political parties.

Our last FORUM in November recalled that it was the crisis over road-building in our Ward in the late 1980's which brought the MPWRA into existence. We have been exclusively represented by Independent Resident councillors (MPWIR) since 1990. That experience has forged true friendships and a shared commitment to independence. Over time of course, people move and newcomers arrive in Merton Park Ward. If you are new to the area, we hope you will join us and, if you can, come to our meetings.

We have no paid staff and depend entirely on our volunteers, so I'd like to thank all those residents who responded to our recent membership appeal. This produced not only a gratifying number of new MPWRA members but also several offers to help with our activities. We have contacted many of you to follow up these offers but, if you haven't heard from us yet, we will be in touch soon. If you want to keep up-to-date with what's happening in our Ward and what the MPWRA is doing, log on to www.mertonpark.org.uk and sign up for our email alerts.

It's only through your membership subscriptions that we can meet the cost of producing and distributing regular editions of FORUM and, every four years, the election expenses we incur to support our Independent Residents (MPWIR) candidates. Once again, thank you!

Hubert Child, Chairman

MPWIR CALLS A HALT TO INCREASED CPZ CHARGES



Cllr Peter Southgate reports:

At the February council meeting, MPWIR won Labour support for an amendment to stop further unjustified increases in resident permit charges and called for the re-introduction of the half day visitor permit. Our amendment was narrowly carried by 31 votes to 27, in the face of Conservative opposition.

When controlled parking zones (CPZ) were first introduced in Merton Park in 2003, an annual resident permit cost £30 and a half day visitor permit 50p. We accepted these charges on the assurance they would only rise in line with necessary administrative costs. Yet

from that moment, successive administrations (first Labour, then Conservative) raised CPZ charges indiscriminately, knowing that you, the residents who had agreed to the CPZ, had no choice but to pay up.

Seven years on, a resident permit costs £65. Half day visitor permits have been withdrawn on the recommendation of Deloittes, despite the fact that half day permits (£1.50) were far more popular than full day, outselling them 5:1. Now a friend or relative stopping by for a cup of tea is going to cost you £2.50 even before you've put the kettle on!

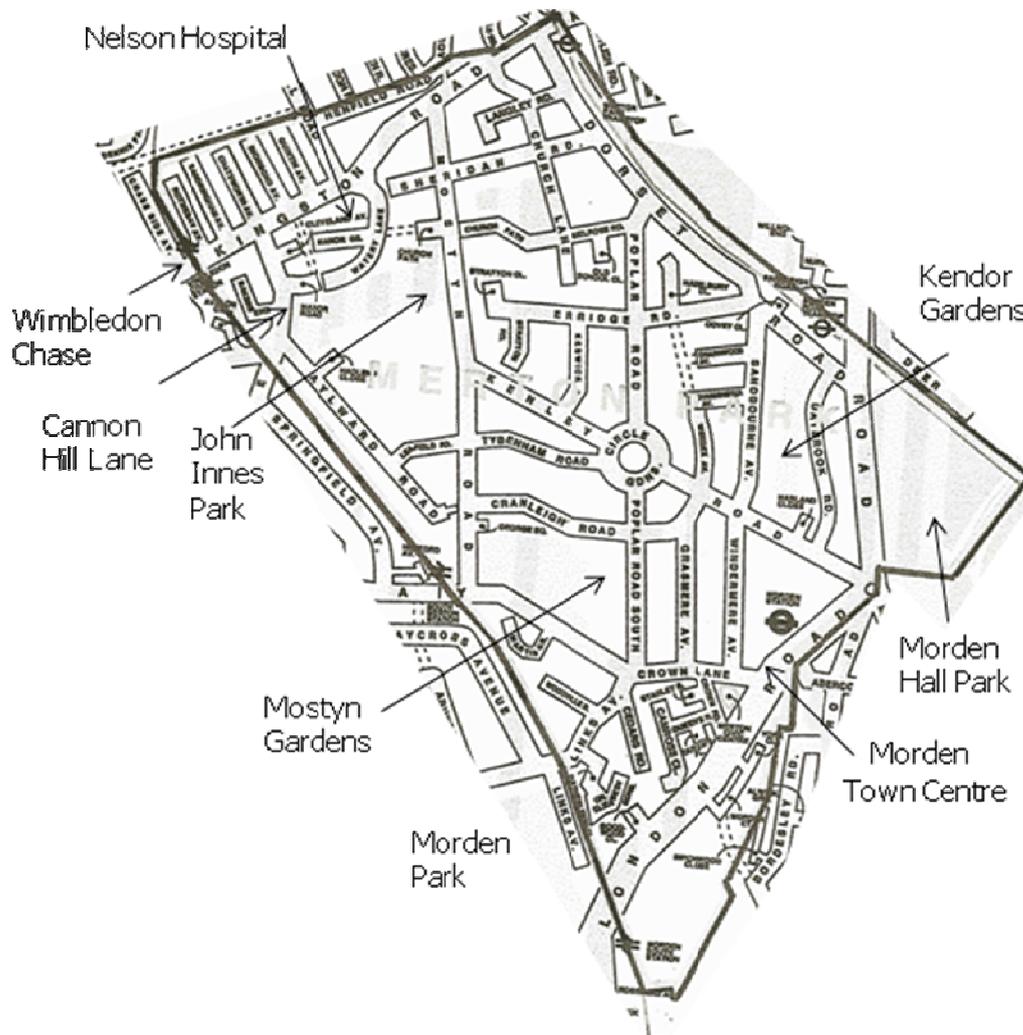
MPWIR has consistently opposed the exploitation of Merton residents in CPZs through excessive increases in permit charges and decided it was time to call a halt.

Merton United Charities needs a new Clerk to the Trustees This charity is responsible for six almshouse flats in Merton Park. Currently I serve as a trustee in my capacity as a Councillor. The Charity is seeking a new Clerk to the Trustees, who would perform administrative and clerical duties to assist the Trustees who meet at least 4 times a year. An honorarium is paid. Details on application to: Chair of MUC Trustees, 3 Church Path, Merton Park SW19 3HJ or vicar@stmarysmerton.org.uk

Cllr Krysia Williams

PRIORITY ACTION AREAS FOR MERTON PARK WARD – UPDATE

At our AGM in July last year, we identified six priorities around Merton Park Ward for action by your MPWIR councillors. Nearly nine months on, they report back on their progress.



MORDEN TOWN CENTRE - REGENERATION

For the past two years members of MPWRA have given their views on the kind of town centre they want to see in Morden (“no overwhelming tower blocks”) and Cllr Krysia Williams has represented MPWIR on the Morden Town Centre Partnership.

Now the Council is examining the viability of residential development in a depressed property market. They are putting the emphasis on higher quality developments which maintain their value in the long term. More than £1m has been allocated for unlocking development potential in Morden town centre over the next three years, together with a share of £5m for transport improvements across the borough e.g. removing the gyratory system around the Civic Centre.

Improvements to the street scene are happening now. Unnecessary guard rails are being removed and MPWIR

councillors have advised on new signage, including an information board detailing places of interest opposite the Civic Centre.

The community toilet scheme gives access to facilities in the Royal Surrey Pub and Cafe Doro (as well as the Civic Centre) without needing to make a purchase; more businesses are expected to join. The Christmas carol service and Valentine’s Day event are now well established traditions.

Still to do – We will actively engage in consultation on the draft masterplan for Morden this summer (You can learn more about this from Paul McGarry, Regeneration Manager for LB Merton, at the MPWRA meeting on 6 April). We will continue to work with residents and the Safer Neighbourhoods Team for a safe pedestrian route from Sainsbury’s to Kenley Road.

WIMBLEDON CHASE – REGENERATION

A packed meeting organised by Wimbledon Civic Forum on 18 March 2009 expressed overwhelming support for a green regeneration of the Chase and galvanised Merton Council into speedy action. New trees have been planted and there are raised flower beds with shrubs. Four benches, litter bins and 14 cycle stands have been installed and pavements re-laid. Kingston Road has just been resurfaced.

Still to do – Sadly, Network Rail has reneged on its promise to paint the railway bridge. We are supporting local activist Ian Smith in his efforts to find an alternative source of funding.

We are liaising between the developer and the Council to attract an anchor tenant for the new retail units by the station that will prove a draw to other retailers. And we continue to work with the Council to minimise the problem of fly tipping around the recycling bins in the Co-op car park.

NELSON HOSPITAL – PLANS FOR LOCAL CARE CENTRE

We are closer to seeing the Nelson Hospital redeveloped as a Local Care Centre than at any time in the last 20 years (and through our involvement with the Nelson Hospital Reference Group we have been monitoring progress for most of that time). Funds totalling £21m have been approved by NHS London.

Preliminary plans were discussed at a packed public meeting on 19 November; Cllr Krysia Williams, Hubert Child and John Sargeant led lively discussion sessions on the services to be provided, planning and transport issues. Sutton and Merton PCT have promised a further meeting in response to the high level of interest shown.

Church Lane and Cannon Hill GP practices will operate from the new Nelson, and the outpatient services

currently provided (X-Ray, ECG, ultrasound and phlebotomy) will continue. Minor surgical procedures, mental health and community health services will be provided. The Centre will be open 12 hours a day, 5 days a week.

Still to do – We will be closely involved in the key planning decisions in the next few months. We want to see consulting rooms on the ground floor for the benefit of elderly and disabled patients, not on the upper floors as proposed. Provision for parking seems barely adequate; it is not realistic to expect everyone to travel to their appointments by bus. And there are big questions over the future of that part of the site not required for the Local Care Centre – should it not be retained to allow for future growth, rather than sold off?

KENDOR GARDENS – CONSULTATION ON PLAY AREA

Last summer MPWIR bid for Kendor Gardens to be one of 14 parks and open spaces to share in £2.5m of grant funding for new adventure play areas, as part of the government's Play Pathfinder Programme. We were very disappointed to learn our bid had not been successful.

The problems are: Kendor Gardens is not owned by the Council and the tube line runs close to the surface. Park rangers do not visit the Gardens on a daily basis, so the safety of play equipment would not be checked every day (clearly this requirement discriminates against smaller unstaffed parks and open spaces).

However, residents will be pleased that **John Innes Park** and **Morden Hall Park** have been selected to share in the funding for adventure play areas in 2010/11. These are the only two sites to win through the open bidding process, and both are accessible and popular. With a new play area already agreed for **Mostyn Gardens**, Merton Park Ward will benefit from three new adventure play areas for our children and grandchildren.

Still to do – engage with local residents and school children on the type of play equipment they would like to see in John Innes Park and Morden Hall Park.

CANNON HILL LANE – 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

A year ago we highlighted the fact that Cannon Hill Lane had inexplicably been excluded from the proposed 20 mph limit area for Merton Park, despite 5 out of 9 personal injury accidents in the area occurring on this stretch of road in the previous three years. Over 90% of residents in Cannon Hill Lane, Manor Road, Bakers End and Cleveland Avenue expressed their support for a 20 mph limit in a survey organised by MPWIR. Despite the evidence that this is an accident black spot and

residents were overwhelmingly in favour, council officers refused to include the Cannon Hill Lane in the 20 mph limit immediately. In January last year we were told that it would be considered for inclusion in 2009/10, and the Cabinet member gave approval in June. Now we have been told there is no funding left this year and no provision in the budget for the next three years.

Still to do – Press for funding from another source, after updating accident statistics for Cannon Hill Lane.

MORDEN PARK – CONSULTATION

MPWIR submitted a detailed response to Local Futures, the consultants engaged last summer to draw up plans for the future of Morden Park in consultation with residents.

Our main recommendations were accepted. These included the return of the playing fields, formerly leased to the London Playing Fields Society, to sports use for a wide range of community organisations; better play facilities for children; and exploring management of the Park by a community trust. State-of-the-art play facilities have now been installed and better signage is promised.

Still to do – While the council has accepted the recommendations from Local Futures, implementation depends on funding, which is expected to get tighter after the general election. We will maintain pressure to ensure undertakings get turned into actions. Regular users have voiced concern over the fate of Morden Park Pool and would prefer to see the existing pool refurbished rather than a new build. We will ensure this viewpoint is properly represented during consultation on the future of the Pool.

Cllr Karin Forbes, Cllr Peter Southgate, Cllr Krysia Williams

INDEPENDENTS MAKE SURE RESIDENTS' VIEWS ON CPZ ARE HEARD



Cllr Krysia Williams writes:

MPWIR carried out a questionnaire survey in Stratton Road, Keswick Avenue and Kenley Road which found out what residents *really* thought about extending the CPZ – and the Council had to change its plans as a result.

Following the extension of MP1, the Merton Park CPZ, to Erridge Road west of Poplar Road, some residents in Stratton Road found themselves with nowhere to park and petitioned to be included in MP1. Unusually the Cabinet member agreed to a reconsultation even though Stratton Road had voted to remain outside MP1 only a few months earlier (see my article in the last edition of FORUM).

Uninvited, officers then added Keswick Avenue and Kenley Road to the consultation, despite residents in these two roads firmly rejecting a CPZ when previously consulted. Statutory consultation assumes the CPZ will go ahead unless valid objections are received. We feared residents would not realise this, and would wake up one morning to find themselves in a CPZ they did not want, without being given the opportunity to express their views beforehand. So we organised a simple reply-paid postal survey to make it easy for residents to respond.

Our fears were realised when only 8 residents responded to the statutory consultation – too few for a valid decision. But 91 responded to the MPWIR survey, a credible 59% response rate. Their answers revealed different opinions in each road:

	For	Against
Stratton Road	15	7
Keswick Avenue	12	16
Kenley Road	21	20

Faced with this evidence, officers dropped their plans to impose MP1 on all three roads, and proposed instead to include Stratton Road only (which was the wish of the petitioners). Given these were the only two options officers would allow for a coherent extension to MP1, we agreed with their proposal (which is still subject to confirmation). It would have been wrong to extend MP1 to Kenley Road and Keswick Avenue when the combined majority in these two roads was against it.

Now residents in Keswick Avenue have to contend with proposals for double yellow lines along the western side. Officers have promised me a public meeting to discuss this. I will let you know the date as soon as I have it.

CPZs are inevitably divisive, and we realise there is no solution to please everyone. But we will always ensure everyone has the opportunity to make their voice heard. If necessary we will run our own consultation when we judge the Council's consultation to be inadequate.

Merton Park Remembrance Society

The War Memorial on the corner of Church Lane and Church Path is a familiar landmark. Not so well known perhaps are the twenty-six Official War Graves in St Mary's churchyard. The Merton Park Remembrance Society was founded in July 2009 to raise awareness of these memorials to the fallen and to ensure that they are properly maintained. For more information see the website www.mertonparkremembers.org.uk or contact the Chairman, Graham McCubbin on 020 8542 1734.

Graham Clark

RUTLISH SCHOOL NEWS



Cllr Karin Forbes writes:

Rutlish School was inspected by **Ofsted** at the end of January. The overall rating that the school received was **satisfactory** mainly because Ofsted now require three years' worth of good results in order to grade a school as **good**. Rutlish has produced good results for the last two years and is very well on target to achieve the same again this year, so they could be in the very strange position where they *invite* Ofsted back in a year's time.

In almost all the categories the Ofsted grading was good and had it not been for the handicap of the three year averaging system, the overall grading would probably have been good.

In particular Ofsted praised the **vision and inspiration** of the leadership team and the impact on behaviour and learning of the changes that have been introduced since the new Headteacher joined. The full report is available

on the school's website www.rutlish.merton.sch.uk and on Ofsted's site www.ofsted.gov.uk.

There have been over 240 applications for the 100 places at the **new joint 6th form**, RR6, which opens in September. All the applicants have been interviewed and offer letters have been sent out. As 6th form students can hold multiple offers we will not know until the start of term exactly how many pupils will be on the 6th form role, but the numbers look encouraging!

The offer letters for boys starting secondary school in **Year 7** this September have been sent out and once again there has been a year on year increase in the number of local boys applying for places, with good levels of applications from Merton Park, Poplar, Wimbledon Chase and Dundonald primary schools.

You may have noticed that the Rutlish boys are now wearing different ties. This is because the school has re-introduced the old House system to allow for better vertical integration. The ties were chosen by the boys.

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

6 April	'Morden Champion' Paul McGarry, Physical Regeneration Manager
4 May	ELECTION WEEK – NO MEETING
1 June	Independents' Role in the New Council
6 July	Annual General Meeting

MPWRA Officers

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

www.mertonpark.org.uk

MPWRA Committee

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