



MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**SUSTAINABLE MERTON – Speaker Tom Walsh
&**

OPEN COMMITTEE MEETING

**13TH FEBRUARY 2019
MINUTES**

1: Welcome from Hubert Child, Chairman and Apologies for absence.

Present: Councillors Peter Southgate & Dickie Wilkinson, Hubert Child, Bryan Anderson, Chris Stutt, Pauline Southgate, Jolanta Novak, David Merriman, Ingrid Holz, Ian Garbett, Desé Child, Greg Bryant, Graham Clark.

Apologies: Henry Wood, Fred Raynor, Stephen Mercer, Philippa Foskett, Patrick MacNamara, Cllr Ed Foley.

2: Minutes of last meeting/matters arising

The minutes of the AGM dated 5th December 2018 had been circulated agreed and signed.

3: Sustainable Merton: Speaker Tom Walsh

Tom opened by explaining that he would briefly talk about Sustainable Merton but also wanted to share what he had learnt at a recent Public Policy Research conference.

The work done is about engagement and helping those who understand climate change find ways to become part of the solution. It mostly concerns volunteers who come to the

council via various means but they all share one thing in common and that is that they're all young. Many professionals and often parents whose minds have been focused on whose futures they're working for. Their youth and energy are changing the way the council are looking. However, the PPR Conference was a shock for Tom in how dramatic and gloomy was their prognosis for the future. Tom went on to explain that there are many aspects that are extremely bad in many parts of the world. The time line given was around 12 years beyond which the situation would be beyond repair.

The purpose of the conference was to establish how bad was the path and what are the possible solutions. Tom's view was facing the harsh reality would help establish what and how we could all do our bit. The size of this problem is enormous and it would need law makers and big business as well as the community. As citizens we have the right to demand a better system from big business as well as on the law makers to legislate appropriately.

The truth of the matter is that weather pattern changes in Britain would get worse and it was even worse in other parts of the world, such as Africa. And there were many who were on the move out of desperation. And this would also get worse forcing more and more people to seek refuge in Europe. The bush fires in California, freezing conditions in the mid-West USA are also climate change. There were similar patterns across all low-lying countries due to rising water levels from the melting of the ice. The Pacific islands are in mortal danger because the ice is melting 4 times as fast as usual.

The climate change problems are too big for our efforts alone and need big business and law makers to solve. We can do our bit and boycott Coca Cola etc.

Q: What solutions are there on offer?

A: There is a general lack of solutions, but Leonardo Di Caprio used much of his fame and fortune to create a foundation in Melbourne & Sydney Universities to try and answer this question. The plan is a 20 year one at the cost of \$1.7trillion a year. The fossil fuel industry gets \$5trillion in subsidies.

Tom went on to explain how the fossil fuel industry has the money. The issues were complex and it's not a plan that has been fully evaluated as yet although it is being taken seriously – it was taken to Davos last week. The plan would lead to a fair society globally. Electricity supply in Africa & Asia is poor currently but solar, wind and hydro power could replace fossil fuels.

There was some discussion as to the extent to which proposals on offer would actually help and the possible reactions of countries desire to participate in the costly changes.

The world is not primed for the changes needed. It is appropriate that the children who are expecting to feel the outcome of the climate change should take to the streets to protest.

Q: If living standards increase in Africa & Asia then consumption will increase?

A: The stakes are high, and we need to tackle climate change. There were 6 power stations running on coal and this will reduce to 0 by 2025.

Q: What is Tom's opinion of Fracking.

A: Fracking will only find a new way to produce CO2 adding to the problem. Picking on a fossil fuel simply because it is cheap is not good.

Q: Are solar panels a good idea?

A: Solar has undergone a massive evolution, commercially, they're cheaper than ever before and are now much more efficient than before. Scientists are working on improving it even further. It is worth, in Tom's opinion, having them installed especially if the user adapts to use the electricity at the time it is being generated. A wall unit in addition to the solar panels would help. However, sending power back to the grid is no longer paid for by the government. If you have an electric car you can travel for free!

Q: Two groups not doing enough are the law makers and big businesses, but laws need enforcement. The example of cars running their engines for extended periods of time was used.

A: The air quality has risen on the agenda dramatically and the latest council plan includes big signs reminding people not to sit with their engines running. There would be a big publicity campaign rolled out across the borough. Sadly, Tom didn't think it would kick in until big fines were given out. There is a general desire for cleaner air. Ultra low emission zone could be in Wimbledon if Government agrees

Q: Is there any key message to those here as to what we can do?

A: There are some simple tasks. This includes lobbying and a positive message can be much more powerful. Marks and Spencers have rolled out a packaging free range of products for example in their Tolworth branch as a result of consumer protest. So, we need to endorse the good and show up the bad. Also, being a democracy makes politicians scared unless they're sure their constituents are on side with the changes. Finally, nurture the local area including preserving the wildlife. Residents were asked to water trees planted by the council and also pick up litter.

Tom closed by reporting that a newsletter is sent out once a month and is worth picking up. It is online via www.sustainablemerton.org once residents register with their email address. Hubert thanked Tom very much for a most instructive and interesting talk.

4. Neighbourhood Watch & Police Liaison Report including report on increase in residential burglaries

John Weatherhead reported good results on Burglaries: 3 burglaries, 3 attempted burglaries. 3 thefts from Motor vehicles and 3 attempted thefts from motor vehicles.

It was reported on Nextdoor being unable to get hold of police. Following investigations 2 people were arrested for the Church Lane burglary. This had been linked to other burglaries around the borough and anti-social behaviour. There had been 3 others at the end of last year and 2 had been arrested for these as well. John would update next month to report on the outcome of the trial.

Q: Has there been a drop since the arrests.

A: There has been a drop, but John was not sure if they had actually been reduced to zero.

There is now a new PC Tom Clargo joined the team following PC James' ??? move to Kingston. It was hoped James would be back in 6 months. Tom has paternity leave coming up this summer.

Wimbledon Police station is now used by our Safer Neighbourhood team police, but the Morden Office is vacant.

Q: Is there any progress on the attack in Watery Lane last month when keys and a phone were stolen?

A: John had not been told anything about this but would report back. He was aware of the previous one as there had been complaints about police in their garden because no-one had told residents what was going on.

Bryan Anderson reminded residents crime statistics are available on through Neighbourhood Watch.

5. Councillors' Reports and Question Time

Hubert started by reminding residents to try to remember to bring their own mugs to save on plastic waste.

Cllr Peter Southgate:

Budgets are due to be set in 3 weeks and issues are: gap for the forthcoming budget £149m...£92m out of council tax, £36m from business rates, £5m from the government and this is the last we will get. Relative to other councils Merton are in pretty good shape. We will have to find some savings next year (£2.9m) but in

subsequent years the funding gap gets large. We will have used up all saved funds in 2 years' time. One source of revenue is the increase in parking charges with a green rationale to alleviate air pollution and reduce car use. This will be reassessed as time goes by. Annual CPZ rates will rise from £65 to £110 or £20 for electric vehicles and the daily permits (£1.50 to £3.00 ½ day or £4 full day), season tickets and other car related costs (extra £150 for diesel car) associated will also rise substantially.

Q: The increase in parking charges was felt by one resident to be excessive especially for diesel cars. And the resident was interested in the councillors view especially since it was presented as a "*faite accompli*" which it isn't until approved. What are the proposals for 2, 3 or 4 cars?

A: This is the first increase in 10 years, and it increased by £5 each year so that it would now be around £100 if the £5 per annum increase had been sustained. There was an increasing scale of surcharges for subsequent cars - 2nd car an extra £50, 3rd car an extra £100, and 4th & 5th cars £150 extra.

Rejected proposals to shut Morden Park House at a saving of £78,000. The Virgin Active gym site now has to be secured at a cost of £300,000 a year.

Proposal to charge rent to the CAB although the consequences must be fully considered.

- **Boundary Commission review**

Relative to the other London Boroughs we are over provided with Councillors, so the proposal is to reduce the number of councillors to 57. Sadly the Conservative councillors are putting in a proposal to reduce to 48.

- **CPZ for Grasmere/Windermere/Kenley**

The consultation closes Friday week, and residents at the meeting said they were all in favour. Requests had been made for paper responses to be made available for residents so they don't have to go online to comment.

Local plan submission

The number of new homes required to be built each year in Merton was more than tripled from 411 to 1328 without thought as to where the new homes will be placed. The council believe their evidence of no spaces for the increase is robust. Homes in back gardens was not recommended and there were rules for car hard standing which said it must be permeable covering.

- Mosque is holding an open day on Sunday 3rd March. Peter has more details for anyone interested.

Q: Cut through at Morden Road?

A: TFL not playing ball over this. Sutton Link not in isolation

Q: Why are there no public toilets in Morden?

A: Morden have toilets in Morden station, but these are locked. The Civic Centre has public toilets when it's open. Some shops pay reduced rates if they open their toilets to the public. The need for public toilets is mentioned in the plan. Of the 25 terminus stations only 4 do not have toilets.

Cllr Dickie Wilkinson

Last week was a particularly long council meeting on **Veolia** who have the waste management contract. The fundamental proposal by the Conservatives was to scrap Veolia and appoint new one and Labour submitted a counter view and amendment. Our independent councillors chose to abstain.

- **Consultation on Heathrow flight paths**

This is about the air space. The consultation is telling us there WILL be new flight paths to accommodate the third runway and is asking for which the most acceptable paths & times are. Dickie ran through the online material available and the questions being asked of residents. Merton Park is on the boundary of both arrivals and departures.

The second part of the consultation concerned independent parallel runways. There is new technology, which is expected to help allowing flight paths to be tighter and landing times closer together. Currently 480,000 flights/year will increase to 500,000 flights/year

Increases in number of flights would start 2021.

Merton Park would be less affected on one of the proposed flight path maps.

The whole issue is extremely complicated.

Q: Have the large number of helicopters been factored in?

A: Yes.

Dickie has some paper copies if any residents would like to take part. This is also available on the Merton Park website.

Cllr Ed Foley

Sent his apologies (attending Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel)

6. Questions, Updates and Any other business

There being no further questions, and Hubert closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – Wed 13th March 2019.

Topic on the agenda – Merton Centre of Independent Living

See www.mertonpark.org.uk for Merton Park News and to sign up for up to date Merton News and e-mail alerts.