



MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

**MERTON CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING – Speaker Michael Turner
&
Councillor's Question Time**

**13TH MARCH 2019
MINUTES**

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

Present: Councillor Peter Southgate, Hubert Child, Bryan Anderson, Pauline Southgate, David Merriman, Ian Garbett, Desé Child, Greg Bryant, Chris Stutt, Graham Clark, Fred Rayner, Pippa Foskett, Ingrid Holtz

Apologies: Councillor Edward Foley, Councillor Dickie Wilkinson, Stephen Mercer, Jolanta Novak.

Hubert apologised that there was only 1 Councillor, but Peter could keep us fully informed. A while back we had to move to Wednesday evenings, but this was not convenient because there are Council meetings on Wednesdays. Hubert was pleased to report that we can now have our meetings on Tuesday evenings and our next one will be on Tuesday 2nd April at Poplar school.

Hubert said a few words about Edward Best, one of the active founder members, who had sadly died. Peter Southgate then went on to discuss Ruth Merriman, an upbeat and well-liked member had also sadly died.

Hubert opened by explaining that the computer password had been lost and it was therefore decided to start with the Councillors' reports and other items.

2: Minutes of last meeting/matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting dated 13th February 2019 had been circulated agreed and signed.

3: Merton Centre for Independent Living: Speaker-Michael Turner

Michael Turner gave his address after the other proceedings outlined below. The computer being still unavailable to project slides, Peter assisted by reading the slides out, where appropriate. Michael spoke on what it was like to be disabled, and that disability took many forms. The Independent Living Centre provided support to people with disabilities and help, including advocacy, to access the assistance they required. There are 25,272 disabled people living in Merton – about 11% of the population. About 27,000 people have hearing difficulties, 13,000 physical difficulties. 3,900 have learning difficulties and 4,800 older people with 4,100 relying on adult social care.

Q Would appreciate a single point of contact for all help available?

A Would be more efficient and save money too.

We separate people with disabilities in this country, but other countries are better at integrating people.

Q Council support for CIL?

A 15% drop in funding. Peter Southgate has asked Scrutiny how Grants are allocated but it is too late for CIL this time.

Q Annual Review is impressive document. It says that Polling Stations should be accessible, and it should be easy to register to vote - perhaps we can help next time?

A Yes please!

Independent living is important – being given a 10th floor flat is not helpful when the lift breaks. Also, there is hate crime directed to the disabled – nearly always perpetrated by carers, family & friends.

CIL have helped people with 1,592 user sessions and 2,225 contacts at various events and meetings. See I Daniel Blake film about struggles to get help.

4. Neighbourhood Watch & Police Liaison Report

There being no police officer present this was not covered.

5. 100 Club Draw

Graham Clark did the first draw of 2019. The 3rd prize of £20 went to no 3=Mr & Mrs Dexter who live in Nottingham but still contribute, the 2nd prize of £30 went to no 24=David Slocombe, and the 1st prize of £50 to no 29=Hubert Child. Hubert pointed out that he had won a prize in this draw quite recently and tried to give the money back, but the meeting voiced strongly that should be declined. Hubert said the money would be put to good use!

6. Councillors' Reports and Question Time

Cllr Peter Southgate:

- **Refuse and re-cycling collections**

There have been a number of meetings about Veolia, the contract had been discussed amongst other things. Merton Park is mostly covered on a Friday. There are two receptacles on the back of each truck. Food waste is separated. We are in a group with four other wards doing some 35,000 collections leaving scope for missed collections. There were some hic-ups in October and November, but statistics show that the number of missed collections is certainly falling and is now down to some 50 each week. People are being encouraged to minimise their waste.

Streets below grade: where the detritus is above the level expected, and the problem of falling branches in the wind were all discussed, and Peter is investigating.

There are reports of green waste bags, from street cleaning, being left behind and these can attract flies, and other matter gets left on top of them.

Fly tipping, which could be anything from one small bag to a lorry load, is described as an epidemic across London. These are not any worse since the changeover. The Council now charges for removing bulky waste, but this doesn't seem to have effected numbers. The matter of fridges was discussed, and residents suggested to arrange for the disposal privately rather than leaving on the pavements.

People can apply for a larger wheelie bin for rubbish if they have a need for one.

The Council are now thinking of asking landlords to take responsibility for making sure all unwanted matter was dealt with responsibility at the end of a tenancy.

There was a small reduction in waste of 9% which is actually 330 tons a month Food waste collection has gone up 58%. Recycling is at 45% with a target of 50%

The Old Ruts former recycling centre was discussed by Greg Bryant. This is being discontinued as a public service, due to costs and insurer stating it is a fire risk. The issue of other recycling centres, such as the one near the Co-op along Kingston Road was discussed - Fly tipping alongside is a problem and the suggestion of CCTV cameras was discussed as a possible solution. There was some discussion about fly-tipping generally and various solutions.

Veolia are paid £5.8m p.a. There are a series of penalties for missed collection statistics and other work not done. It appears the contract was not profitable for Veolia in their first year. It does appear that the system is now settling down. The contract is due to expire in 2025. If the Council wish to give notice, they need to give 2 years notice and things like exit payments have to be agreed.

Various local problems were discussed such as Kendor Gardens, and textiles waste, not taken from one resident although it should have been, and other residents had not had problems. If there is fly tipping on private land it is the owner's problem, but Peter will

try to get it cleared. If it is in alleys a gate should be considered because the Council will contribute 30-40% of the costs.

- **Council Tax.** The increase overall was 5.8%, Merton's part was 4.99%, the GLA precept was up 9% and a large portion of that was for policing. Targets were set each year and there was previously no attempt to review these. Peter had made the point that there was much to be learnt from doing this.

Parking charges were discussed and they will now definitely be going up substantially. It is unpopular but the size of revenues needed necessitated the increases. It also has the benefit of reducing the use of cars.

- Morden planning application. The former Woolworths is now being redeveloped as a tuition centre and flexible office space. The local plan has it designated as shopping space. However, given the growth of online shopping, the new local plan is looking to new uses to create a vibrant local economy.
- MP4 CPZ consultation. Consultation results are awaited.
- The official opening of the new Pool in Morden Park will take place on 30th March 2019.
- On 2nd June, the Antiques Road show will be coming to Morden Hall Park.

Q: Potential for a footpath, to Morden Road Tram stop between Cadet Centre and the Community school was discussed.

A: There is a difference in levels and there were other difficulties. It may require help from residents such as petitioning. The payment is also an issue.

Cllr Dickie Wilkinson & Cllr Ed Foley were unable to attend due to meeting clashes.

6. Questions, Updates and Any other business

Hubert outlined the need for more members and there would be a recruitment drive to encourage more local support. The Committee and Canvassers from last year's election will be knocking on doors of non-members who sounded positive when canvassed last year. The more members we have, as well as the more people who come to meetings, the, more evidence our Councillors have of support for our policies and the things we stand for. Also, the more residents become members, the more people will be eligible to vote in the selection of Independent Resident candidates, prior to elections.

Actually, new members have kept the membership numbers up very well over the years, despite the inevitable losses from people moving away, and sadly deaths. Money is also

an issue, costs have risen, hall rent, printing Forum and of course running elections. Provided we can increase the membership we hope to hold the annual subscription at the £5 it has been for many years. So, ways in which you can help

We would be grateful if anyone would join in the membership drive and knock on a few doors. We will of course provide equipment and information about which doors to visit and give guidance on what to say. You could start by going out with an existing canvasser

If you are not already a member, please join

If you are not already a member of the 100 Club, please join that

As I often ask, please give generously in the donation bowl at coffee time as that helps with the cost of hiring this hall.

On the subject of coffees & teas it would be good if you could bring your own cup as that would lessen our use on non0recyclable cups to help 'save the planet'.

Following our Speaker's address (please see above) Hubert closed the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting – Tues 2nd April 2019 at Poplar Primary.

Topic on the agenda – Merton's Fire Services & Councillors Question Time

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