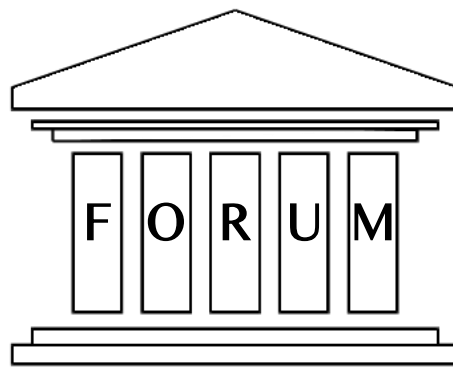


Merton Park Ward Residents' Association

for the residents of: Morden | Merton Park | Wimbledon Chase



Spring 2019

Issue 62

New Post Office in Merton Park Ward

Last week I read that one in five post offices is closing, and so I was pleased to be asked officially to open our new post office at Nelson Newsagents, 3 Merton Park Parade on 17th April.

Already a thriving newsagent and convenience store, Mr Patel has expanded his business to accommodate a post office counter and is now offering that service as well. That's two post offices we now have in Merton Park Ward. (The other is on Crown Lane in Morden).

EF

Inside this Issue:

- Results of our Parking Fees /Car Usage Survey
- CPZ for Grasmere, Kenley & Windermere update
- Boundary Review news



Letter from the Chairman:

Welcome to our Spring edition of "FORUM" our twice yearly publication delivered to every door in Merton Park Ward, which includes parts of Morden and all of Wimbledon Chase. "FORUM" enables Merton Park Ward Residents Association and its Independent Residents Councillors to reach out to all our residents and to inform you of the local issues that affect you.

You can keep up to date between editions by visiting our website www.mertonpark.org.uk or by asking us to include you in our regular email alerts (send your request to mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk).

What we would really like is for you to come to our monthly meetings which are open to everyone.

You will usually hear from a topical guest speaker and always from your Independent Residents Councillors - and questions from the audience make for a lively evening. It is also a social event with teas and coffees at "halftime" giving you the chance to meet the neighbours and kindred spirits as well as the Councillors and committee. Meetings are already gratifyingly well attended but we have room for more. The bigger the audience, the more the people who can let their Councillors know their opinions – local democracy at work in Merton Park Ward.

Hubert Child—Chairman | Tel: 020 8540 3087 | Email: hubertchild@hotmail.co.uk

Contact your local Independent Ward Councillors (pictured left -right)

Cllr. Peter Southgate - Leader MPWIR	peter.southgate@merton.gov.uk / 020 8542 2053
Cllr. Edward Foley	edward.foley@merton.gov.uk / 020 8542 5824
Cllr. Dickie Wilkinson	dickie.wilkinson@merton.gov.uk / 07905 103 686



How Much Do You Love Your Car?

Parking charges in Merton are set to double in many cases next year. The council’s stated aim is to “improve air quality and public health, and encourage active travel and sustainable transport”. The policy is to raise parking charges to the point where they “provide a disincentive to car use, leading to fewer road traffic emissions” and to “encourage alternative, sustainable and active modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and car sharing”.

But will it work? Years of ownership have made many of us dependent upon the car as our preferred, primary mode of transport, and we may find it hard to break the habit of a lifetime. The dilemma of whether we can (or want to) change our ways evidently caught your interest; 143 residents responded to our on-line survey, and we are grateful to every one of you for taking the time and getting involved.

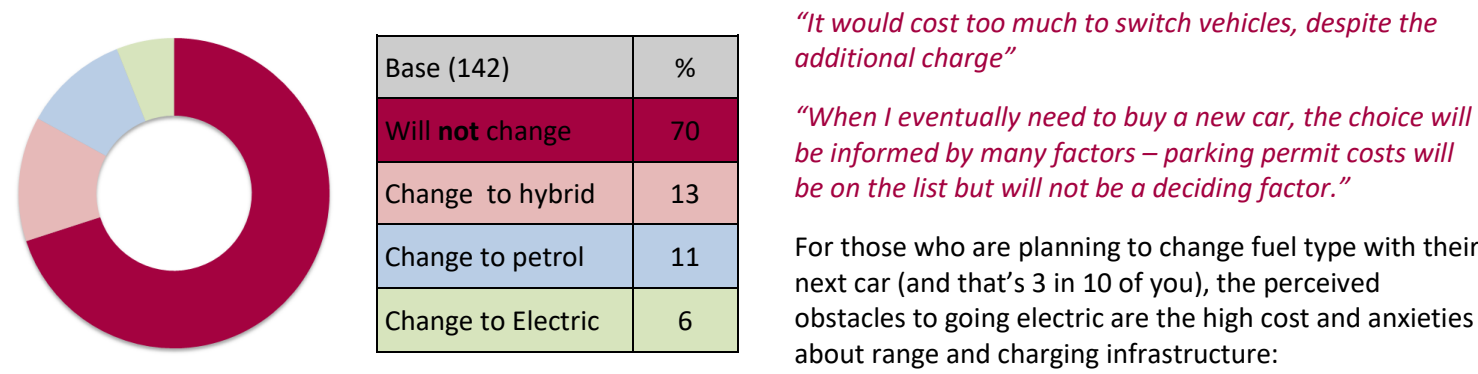
The target audience for our survey was car owners who are planning to change their cars in the next 2–3 years. Of these, 57% have one car in the household, 40% have two and 3% three or more. Half these cars are parked off the road or are outside a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ), so the increased charge for a Resident Parking Permit will not affect them. But 45% face an increase from £65 to £110 in Merton Park (MP1) for a permit for the first car (petrol), and 5% will pay £160 for a second car parked on the road in a CPZ. Since 2017, diesel owners must pay an additional levy of £150 if they require a Resident Parking Permit – total £260.

A potentially unwelcome consequence of the increase in permit fees could be more front gardens being paved over to create hard standing, in order to get cars off the road and thus avoid the need to buy a permit altogether. Nearly a quarter (23%) say they will consider this option, although others regret the cost to the environment:

“Like many of my neighbours I could turn my front garden into hard standing, but how does it help the environment and climate control to remove all plants and shrubs from frontages?”

With permit fees varying massively by fuel type (the cost for an electric car is only £25), the policy aims to encourage drivers to change to less polluting fuel types when they replace their present cars. Nevertheless 7 in 10 say they will **not** change fuel type.

Owners’ reasons for sticking with their current cars relate primarily to the capital cost of replacement, plus environmental factors. Against this, the increased cost of a permit is a minor consideration:



“Battery life not yet long enough for the long drives and recharging points not everywhere.”

“Cost of buying electric cars is still prohibitively expensive.”

So moves to hybrid or (for diesel owners) petrol seem far more likely than going electric, at least in the short/ medium term. But the reduction in pollution from emissions will be less.

The bigger question for some residents is whether to give up running a car altogether.

9 in 10 regard this as unlikely at present (69% “very unlikely” and 20% “fairly unlikely”), but that leaves 1 in 10 who are likely to give up altogether rather than replace their present car (5% “very likely” and 6% “fairly likely”). The increased cost of a permit is not a significant factor in this decision, however. Age is the more likely determinant:

“I’m 84 and don’t think I’ll buy another car.”

We asked everyone what they would do if they no longer owned a car. *Only 5% would switch to the active modes (walking and cycling) the policy is designed to encourage.* Most would rely on public transport:

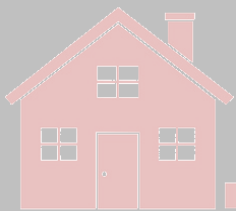


39%
Use
Public
Transport



13% Taxis
or Uber

23%
Go
Out
Less



19% Join a car club



5%
Walk or
Cycle
More



0%
Rely on
lifts from
Friends &
Neighbours



0% Car share

One in 5 (19%) would join a car club like ZipCar (ubiquitous on the streets of Merton Park) if they no longer had a car, more than 10% would use taxis or Uber. Nearly a quarter (23%) would go out less without a car, which is worrying, especially if they are elderly and isolated. It seems that people are unwilling to rely on car sharing or friends and neighbours for lifts in this situation.

So the conclusion we draw overall is that a solid majority of 7 in 10 will **not** change their car for a less polluting fuel in response to increased permit charges, and fewer still will give up their cars altogether. But is a potential shift amongst 3 in 10 to a less polluting replacement car enough to judge the council's policy a success? Replicated across Merton it would bring a measurable change, both in the number of cars on the streets and the level of pollution from their emissions.

Time will tell whether this is reflected in improved air quality readings.

You can see all the summary data from our survey on our website at: www.mertonpark.org.uk/localissues

PS

NB: Results are based on a self selected sample from the MPWRA email alerts file. It does not claim to be representative of the adult population of Merton Park Ward.

Councillor Numbers Review

Those of you present at our April meeting may recall I reported upon the progress of the Boundary Commission review on the number of Councillors in Merton. MPWIR had supported the administration's submission reducing the number of councillors to 57 (as opposed to the current 60).

The reason this is happening is because the Boundary Commission has a duty is to ensure that electorate to councillor ratios in each ward are spread evenly across the borough. The current ratio is approx 2650:1 and the Boundary commission feels this should rise to approx 2850:1 at the next election.

As it happens Merton Park Ward is almost spot on (only 4% below average) and should increase slightly due to Morden regeneration and natural growth.

A reduction in councillors does mean that overall some ward boundaries may change. However Merton Park Ward boundary is so clearly defined by the railway and tram lines that I suspect the Boundary Commission would not deem it sensible to overly disrupt this... though of course that's just my opinion! However this does have some support - at the Standards & General Purposes Committee that I attended to discuss this very point, The Independent Person* added :

"that the important relationships that Councillors had with their constituents was considered as it would be distressing for many to change to different Councillors having built trust and relationships with their current members."

We have since been notified that the proposed number of 57 councillors in Merton has been accepted and therefore a consultation will now go out to look at how this will affect the ward boundaries.

Note, however as the European elections are now having to take place this consultation has been delayed until the beginning of June.

Be assured that we will keep you up to date on these developments.

DW

*the I.P. is a statutory role fulfilled by an appointed member of the public to provide a non-partisan view at the Standards & GP Committee which oversees the conduct of the officers and members.

June Meeting - A Councillors' Extended Q&A

We recognise that often our meetings need to be cut short as we have to vacate the building, but many of you still have questions, or simply want the opportunity to have a chat about our activities as councillors and how we are best representing your interests.

Therefore, we want to offer up our June meeting to you and

have an extended Councillors' question time.

Also, if you have a campaign or issue that you want to share and get feedback from your fellow residents then why not take up a **5 minute 'soapbox slot'?** Simply email your chosen topic to: mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk.

There is also a special announcement of an exciting new Ward project we would like you to participate in!

£5000 For Merton Park - How Would You Spend It?

The Community Infrastructure Levy Ward Allocation Scheme (to give its full title) has been set up to give £5000 to each of Merton's 20 wards every year for the next three years, or £15000 in total. The money is to be spent on projects to improve our public space, to be chosen and agreed by your ward councillors.

This is where you come in. As an organisation that strives to reflect its residents' wishes, MPWRA would like you to say how you want the money to be spent in our Ward. But nothing too ambitious please – the council has given us a fairly short shopping list, and £5000 only goes so far.

The projects from which to choose are:

- improvements to parks: seating, litter bins, railings and playground equipment
- improvements to the street scene: painting street lighting columns and fences, clearing vegetation from highways and footpaths, repairing/replacing street furniture
- general: supporting volunteer clean ups, planting bulbs on open spaces, removing graffiti from private property, part funding alley-gate schemes

To select your top three choices, please go to our website and complete the short survey. As well as telling us what your top choices are, please say where you would like to see these improvements made. Although we can't promise to meet all requests, we will publish the results of the survey and let you know which projects were finally chosen.

And before you ask, some projects are specifically excluded – planting street trees, traffic calming measures and benches on highways. That's because such projects are funded from other sources.

PS

Join us at Our Future Meetings - All Welcome

Tuesday 7th May – 8pm

Merton Park Primary School (Erridge Road)

Guest Speaker: Christine Roe, Cranleigh Tennis Club on the topic of:

90th Anniversary of Cranleigh Tennis Club!

Plus: Councillors' Reports & Q&A

Tea and Coffee served during break with biscuits and a chance to chat to your councillors and neighbours.

Tuesday 4th June – 8pm

Your Ideas and Our Plans! An extended Councillors' Q&A and open forum

Tuesday 2nd July - 8pm

Guest Speaker: Sarah Gould, Merton Heritage Quiz, and AGM

August No Meeting

But do feel free to sign up to our email alerts or become a member!

Tuesday 3rd September – 8pm

Guest Speaker: Met Police - Scams and how to avoid them NB Venue: Poplar Primary School

Not yet a member of MPWRA? - Join at: www.mertonpark.org.uk

MPWRA Officers

Chairman: Hubert Child 020 8540 3087
Vice Chairman: Bryan Anderson
Secretary: Christine Stutt 020 8543 6843
Treasurer: Fred Rayner

MPWRA Committee

Ingrid Holtz Patrick McNamara Greg Bryant
Graham Clark Stephen Mercer Pauline Southgate
Philippa Foskett David Merriman Jolanta Nowak
Ian Garbett

Contact MPWRA:

Website: www.mertonpark.org.uk
Email: mpwra@mertonpark.org.uk
Telephone: 0208 540 3087

Progress on CPZ For Grasmere, Windermere & Kenley Area

In a response to a petition from residents, proposals for a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) in Grasmere Avenue, Windermere Avenue and Kenley Road (between Windermere Avenue and Circle Gardens) went out to consultation in February. The results and the Cabinet member's decision was published on 6th April, and you can read the full report via the link on the MPWRA website

In summary, the findings from the consultation show just how different each road is in its response to parking pressures. So Windermere Avenue (relatively wide, and with existing controls on parking Monday to Friday) has chosen not to come into the CPZ, whereas Grasmere Avenue and Kenley Road have both opted in by wide margins.

With Windermere Avenue out of the equation, the focus shifts on to the preferred days of operation for the proposed CPZ in Grasmere Avenue and Kenley Road. Here the preferences are very different.

Do you support a CPZ in your road?				
	Base	Yes	No	Unsure
Windermere Avenue	(36)	43%	54%	3%
Grasmere Avenue	(40)	78%	17%	5%
Kenley Road	(19)	89%	11%	-

Parking congestion is actually worse in Grasmere Avenue at weekends, because the controls that restrict parking to one side apply only Monday to Friday. Thoughtless parking on both sides restricts the narrow carriageway at weekends, making it impassable for emergency vehicles. So Grasmere residents need parking controls to be operative 7 days a week to ensure emergency vehicle access.

The parking pattern in Kenley Road is very different. Here the carriageway is wide enough to allow the K5 bus to pass, even with cars parked on both sides. There are no parking controls, so congestion is greatest Monday to Friday with commuter parking, but eases at weekends, freeing up spaces for family and friends to visit. Access for emergency vehicles is not an issue. Understandably, the option preferred by most residents here is controls Monday to Friday, leaving weekends free.

When the two roads are added together, the overall preference is for controls 7 days a week, by a narrow margin (41% v 38%). But this is like adding apples and pears, it will work for Grasmere Avenue but will not suit Kenley Road. Nevertheless the Cabinet member has to make a decision, and has come down in favour

of controls Monday to Sunday. This is the recommendation that will now go forward to the next stage of consultation.

Fortunately, we think there is a better solution, which is to put Kenley Road into MP1, the existing CPZ which already covers Sandbourne Avenue, Wessex Avenue and Circle Gardens. Here the controls are Monday to Friday, which is much closer to the preferences expressed by Kenley residents. We have already put this proposal to the Cabinet member, but because the option was not included in the consultation, it cannot be introduced retrospectively.

If Kenley Road residents want to join MP1, they must wait for the next statutory consultation stage to make their preferences known. We will distribute a newsletter and survey to make it easy for them to respond, but the default outcome is that Kenley Road will be included in MP4 with controls 7 days a week if residents do not object.

If you live in any of the three roads included in the CPZ consultation and you have questions arising from this article, do please get in touch.



The Missing Link to Morden Road Tram Stop

For years we have nurtured the ambition to see a path opened up from Dorset Road to the Wimbledon-bound platform of the Morden Road tram stop. The route has been safeguarded alongside the boundary of Park Community School, and only a few metres remain to be opened up to the platform.

Now our ambition is officially recognised in the snappily-titled *"Draft Third Local Implementation Plan: Transport Plan"* which notes (para 5.17) **"Morden Road Southern Access: The development of a step free access from Dorset Road to Morden Road Tram stop is a long-standing borough aspiration. TfL have made a preliminary assessment and confirmed that the project could be deliverable, subject to some equipment/infrastructure modifications on the stop itself"**

But the date given for delivery is not until 2022-24 and – worse – it is tied to the Sutton Link tram extension which is unfunded and may never be built. We see no reason why this simple path cannot be completed NOW! We will be working hard to overcome the bureaucratic obstacles standing in our way.

PS

MPWIR Councillor Chosen to be Deputy Mayor

Although Merton currently has a Labour administration, and traditionally a Labour Mayor, the forthcoming year bucks the trend. The Mayor for 2019-20 will be a Conservative, Councillor Janice Howard from Wimbledon Park Ward, and I have been chosen as Deputy Mayor.

I'm honoured to have been chosen and will look forward to deputising for The Mayor and representing Merton. As Deputy Mayor, I will continue my usual councillor duties but will also have the added role of cultivating a positive image of the borough and visiting charities, volunteers and organisations throughout Merton.

The official Mayor making ceremony is at the Annual Council Meeting on Wednesday 15th May at the Civic Centre.

EF

And a Note from MPWRA's Chairman

On everyone's behalf I should like to congratulate Edward on receiving this considerable (and busy!) honour. He is the latest in a line of our Independent Residents Councillors to have been Deputy Mayor.

Our very first Independent Residents Councillor, Bridget Smith, became Mayor. At the present time of dissent within and between Parties in Central Government in Westminster, it is gratifying to see continued cross-party appointments of Mayor and Deputy Mayor in the London Borough of Merton.

HC

Events In & Around Merton Park Ward

As warmer weather approaches (one hopes) the coming months see a number of events happening all across the Ward. In fact it is fantastic to see just how much is going on locally and we would encourage everyone to help support any events in the Ward as the vast majority of them are organised and run by volunteers which just goes to show the amount of community spirit within Merton Park!

Depending on your love of a summer fair, our three Primary schools, Merton Park, Poplar & Park Community, all have their summer fairs on the same day! That's Saturday 6th July. so you can either make it a bumper day of coconut shies, tombolas and family fun, or you may wish to escape them altogether and visit one of the many green spaces in our Ward instead!

Note this is not a complete list and at the time of going to press some details needed to be confirmed so do keep a look out on our website for further updates.

DW

Rutsfest: Sunday, 26 May at Old Ruts Sports Ground. A day of live music and entertainment for all the family.

BBC Antiques Road Show: Sunday, 2 June, Morden Hall Park Hugely popular TV show will be giving you an opportunity to have your gewgaws appraised.

Music in the Park: Sunday, 23 June, 3-5pm, John Innes Park 30th Anniversary Special - Music by Putney & Wimbledon Brass Band.

St Mary's Church Summer Festival: Saturday, 29 June, 3pm to dusk in the Glebe Field.

Poplar Primary School Summer Fair: Saturday 6th July from Midday to 3pm.

Merton Park Primary School Summer Fair: Saturday 6th July. Time tbc

Park Community School Summer Fair: Saturday 6th July. Time tbc