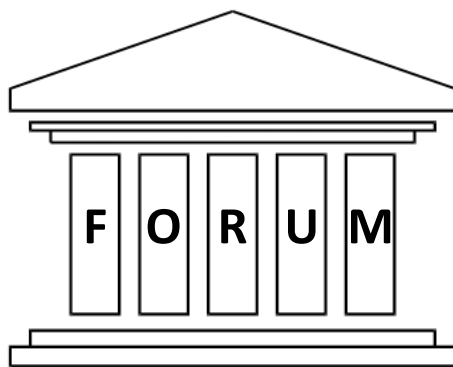


Merton Park Ward Residents' Association

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



Autumn 2022

Issue 69

Peter Southgate - Honorary Alderman

A special council meeting was held on 5th September to recognise the service given by some councillors that stood down this year, or were not re-elected.

Peter Southgate stepped down after 20 dedicated years' service and was formally recognised with the title of Honorary Alderman. He is pictured receiving his award from the Mayor.



Inside this Issue:

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- Getting Down to Work
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Letter from the Chairman:

Welcome to the Autumn 2022 edition of FORUM. It is now over 5 months since the Boundary Commission reduced the number of councillors representing Merton Park Ward, from three to two. Your Independent Residents Councillors live in the ward and are thus in close touch, but inevitably the workload per councillor has risen. The MPWRA Committee have been able to provide support, particularly on planning matters where luckily we have expert members. As members of the community please do let us know if there are any ways you think you can help.

Merton Council – “Report It”

Have you discovered the “Report It” section on the council website? Your councillors and MPWRA look out for problems around the ward and we know you do too. It would help us if everyone could keep an eye out and when something occurs, please go to the council website and enter “Report It” in the search box. This produces sections for fly tipping and litter, missed household waste collections, parks and more catch-all headings such as “FixMyStreet”. You can go straight to “FixMyStreet” via the council’s search box, although the categories there are more limited and the system more complex.

Please help by reporting your observations on “Report It”. Matters like fly tipping and missed household waste collections usually get a fairly swift response, other matters a little longer. If you do not get a response in a reasonable time then do, of course, ask your councillors for help or get in touch via the MPWRA website.

Hubert Child—Chairman / Tel: 0208 540 3087 / Email: hubertchild@hotmail.co.uk

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

Cllr. Edward Foley

edward.foley@merton.gov.uk / 020 8542 5824

Cllr. Stephen Mercer

stephen.mercer@merton.gov.uk / 020 8543 2143



Good Design in Planning

Recent Local and National Changes.

The impact of new Policies in the National Design Guide dated January 2021 are already being seen within Merton Park. This August, a local householder lost their appeal against Merton Council's refusal of plans to enlarge their semi-detached two storey house. The property is not in a conservation area. They wanted to remodel the house with a large two storey side extension, a ground floor front extension, a hip to gable roof extension and a rear dormer roof extension.

The Appeal Inspector said the main issues were the effects of the development, having regard to the character of the dwelling and the surrounding area. "The bulk and size of the extensions would lack subservience to the original design of the house and its pair, and at the rear, the large unbroken dormer would be intrusive and dominate the roof of the property. The result would be harm to the character and appearance of the dwelling and its surrounding area. Developments should comply with local, London and National policies to achieve acceptable scale and appearance".

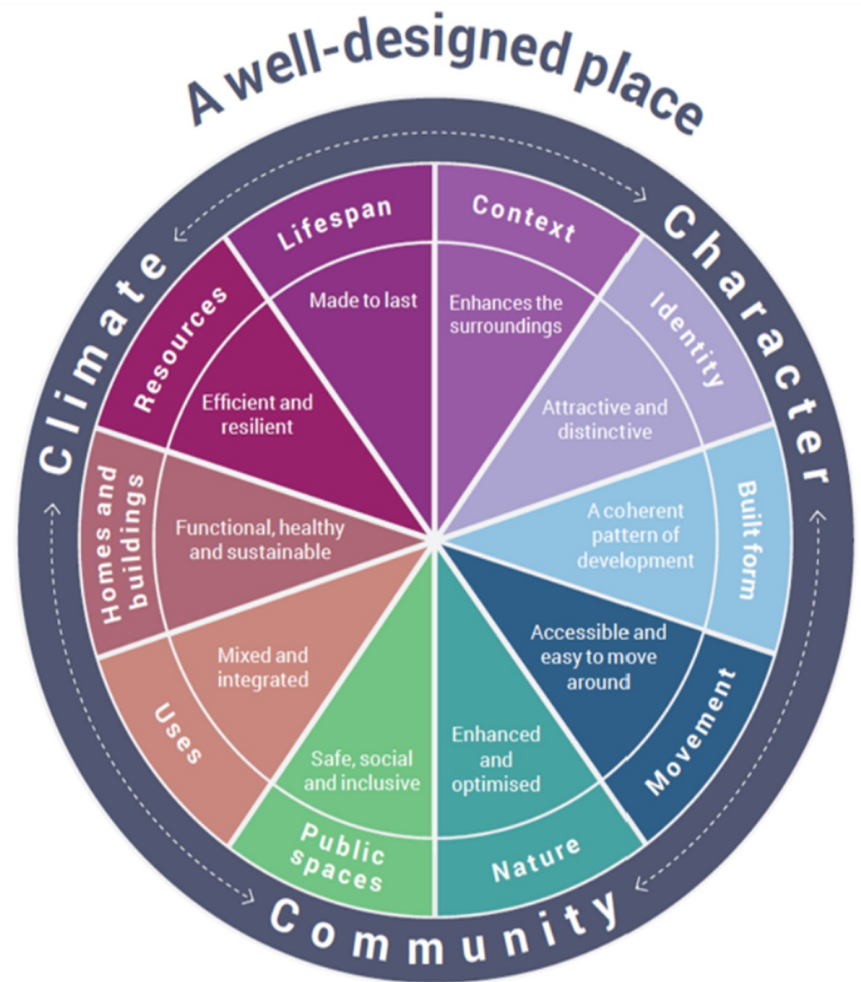
As can be seen from the attached wheel diagram, reproduced from the Design Guide, there are ten criteria, all of which are important. The first three, on which the Appeal Inspector based his decision, are **Context, Identity and Built Form**, which includes a coherent pattern of development.

Developments, large or small, must also consider **Resources** which include water, energy efficiency, the impact of climate change, minimizing carbon emissions, and anticipating events such as rising temperatures and the increasing risks from flooding.

If you see a proposal for a development which appears to ignore all, or any, of the ten criteria in the National Design Guide, that you can find in full on the Government's website, then it is well worth drawing attention to this in the representations you make to the Planning Department. The Government's planning inspectors are taking the Design Guide very seriously.

Desé Child

This is an extract from an article which first appeared in the September 2022 issue of The John Innes Society Newsletter.



Reproduced from the National Design Guide January 2021

MPWRA recently commented on two major planning applications

The Wimbledon Chase Station application – this involves a nine-storey tower block at the southern end of residential streets of traditional low-rise housing. We referred to national and local planning policies that require developments to be in keeping with the surroundings and protect against the huge over-massing and over-shadowing effect. The opportunity to incorporate step-free access to the Station was missed. The environment agency has said the site is on an aquifer. This could make ground support for nine storeys questionable.

The LESSA Sports Ground application to build housing on the site just off Grand Drive - we commented that with the ever-increasing population, we will need more sports grounds and open spaces, **not less**. Sadly the application was approved subject to including affordable housing and a substantial Section 106 cash subscription. This could be used to improve other sports facilities but could only really be properly used if it provided replacement sports ground, say on brownfield land.

Hubert Child

Getting Down to Work

I am pleased to say that I am now starting to feel I know a little more about the role. A key part is knowing that it takes a lot of effort before anything gets changed, but also that little changes if you don't make the effort! Our reduced team of 2 has been very busy since the election but MPWRA committee members are stepping up and taking on more tasks so that, hopefully, we can continue to address any significant local issue. Some of these are listed in our 'News' section; others that I have particularly been involved in are –

Peel House Car Park – as many of you will remember, the problems of fly tipping and fly parking, as well as the huge disruption to local businesses and inconvenience to residents continued from last winter until the reopening of the ground floor at the end of August. As councillors, Ed and I had repeatedly supported and highlighted the complaints and comments of residents. A very small success was getting the lights turned off but otherwise progress was slow. On one hand, council officers needed to be satisfied that the lower area could be used safely. On the other, the fact that the car park is owned by TFL and not Merton Council, limited the options available. The council lost significant income during the closure, so that it was also motivated to progress matters and at the end of July a tender process was started to get the top half repaired. The tenders should have been submitted by the end of October so that we can be hopeful of some repair work starting on the upper level later this year, or early next year.

Street Trees a number of substantial trees in the area have either been cut down or are due to be. The council has plans for plenty of tree planting but those will be saplings. Ed and I discussed the issue with the Chief Executive who has a lot of sympathy with our concerns but says she has insufficient staff. We shall continue to apply pressure but I encourage all of you to write to the council if you have concerns about any of your local street trees and copy to us, in the hope that trees are saved before it is too late.

Old Ruts – the club is at the centre of our community and the sports sections provide exercise and fresh air for 1000+ children on a regular basis. However, they are bulging at the seams and I had a discussion with Mike Stallard about how MPWRA and Old Ruts could cooperate to enable them to continue to do a great job. Easier said than done, but we shall work at it.

Green Economy – as a small business owner, I have been working with officers from the Sustainable Communities team to identify opportunities for businesses to help with reducing Merton's environmental impact. I don't think any of my contributions are earth shattering but I suspect that they give a different perspective to the options being considered.

Ukraine – many of us were eager to help the refugees when the war broke out in February. A lot of residents offered accommodation in their homes and I am pleased to say that my wife and I started hosting Viktoria and Misha (aged five) in June. The government scheme anticipated an initial stay with the local hosts of six months, with some financial support. This scheme was vital and enabled many people to be safely accommodated at the time of the initial crisis. However, the plans after the first 6 months are very vague. At the moment it seems likely that Ukrainian refugees will only be helped to find new accommodation if their hosts actively make them homeless. This is completely contrary to the spirit in which we welcomed these people to our homes – surely we can do better than that? I have asked the question...

Stephen Mercer

Queen Elizabeth II

Following the death of Queen Elizabeth II on 8th September, a number of events locally were held to pay tribute to her lifetime of service and duty as Britain's longest reigning monarch. A book of condolence was opened at The Civic Centre the following morning for members of the public to sign and leave a tribute. A service was also held that morning to lay flowers at the war memorial outside and afterwards members of the public also laid flowers. On Sunday 11th September, at 4pm the Mayor of Merton read the Proclamation of King Charles III from the balcony at the front of Crown House. The event was well-attended as expected by many local residents from the borough.

Our local Ahmadiyya community held a remembrance service on the 13th September which was attended by local council leaders and MPs.

A vigil was also held at the war memorial (*right*) in Wimbledon Village that was very well attended.

Edward Foley



Councillor Foley signing the Book of Condolence.



News in Brief

Daffodils – Jason Besant has successfully secured funding again this year and the scheme has been expanded to cover more local roads. We can look forward to an even better display next year.

Mostyn Gardens – Neaz Ahmed and her team have been hard at work this year helping to keep these gardens looking attractive. The team supplements the work undertaken by Merton Council.

Merton Park Heritage trail - this year's trail, linked to Merton's Heritage Day events, was just as successful as previous ones. Over 20 photographs were displayed around the ward showing scenes from the early 20th Century onwards. A lot has changed since then.

Speakers at recent MWRA meetings included:

- Baljeet Nijjhar on arrangements for Ukrainian refugees;
- Susanne Ollig on the Walk and Talk movement;
- Andrew Kaufman from Merton Council on Merton's parks and green spaces; and
- Tara Butler from Future Merton at Merton Council on Morden regeneration and the Climate Strategy/ Action Plan.

Merton Park School fireworks – after three years' absence this will be held this year on Sunday 6th November at Church Lane Playing Fields. Tickets and further information can be obtained from the school and on-line, with money raised going to school funds. After fears that the event would not go ahead we thank Ed Foley for helping to ensure that common sense prevailed.

Waste collection and Street Cleaning – Merton Council will discontinue its contract with Veolia for these services from 2025. Our Independent councillors campaigned hard for this both during the local elections and thereafter, so this news is very welcome and shows what a difference our councillors can make.

Free legal advice on education rights - 30 minutes of free advice is now available from South West London Law Centres. Call 020 8767 2777 or go to swllc.org/get-advice/education for information.

Finally a positive note on planning – following comments from Peter Southgate and Stephen Mercer, planning officers ensured that developers made reasonable adjustments to the proposed development on the old Robins and Day site along Morden Road. A small but important success that shows how planning decisions can be influenced by residents' representation.

Join us at Our Future Meetings - All Welcome

Tuesday 1st November - 8pm

Merton Park Primary School (Erridge Road)

Speaker tba

Please see website below and posters

Plus: Councillors' Reports & Q&A

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

Tuesday 6th December - 8pm

N.B. January 2023 - No Meeting

Tuesday 7th February - 8pm

Councillors' Question Time and seasonal refreshments

But do resolve to join MPWRA if you haven't done so already!

Speaker tba

MPWRA Officers

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

MPWRA Committee

Neaz Ahmed
Mariam Ali-Putnergill
Bryan Anderson
Greg Bryant
Ian Garbett
Ingrid Holtz
Stephen Johnson
Pauline Lightfoot

Jolanta Novak
Pauline Southgate
Peter Southgate
Krysia Williams

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