

Merton Park Ward Residents Association

Meeting Tuesday, March 4 2025 8 pm at Merton Park Primary School

Present

Councillor Edward Foley, Councillor Stephen Mercer, David Merriman, Fred Rayner, Ian Garbett
Stephen Johnson, Pauline Lightfoot, Chris Stutt, *Peter Southgate*

Apologies for absence

Mariam Ali-Puttergill, Greg Bryant, Krysia Williams, Philippa Foskett, Bryan Anderson

1.0 Police Safer Neighbourhood Team

Constable Tom Carter introduced the Merton Park SNT Paula Bresler, PCSO Dave Heywood and Sergeant Atwell *Sgt Nathan Attwell; PC Tom Carver; PCSO Dave Haywood & PCSO Paula Besleaga*

The Police provided a handout with the crime statistics for Merton Park. They noted that the crime statistics are generally low although there were a few more burglars at Christmas. The Police emphasised that all crime should report be reported, even minor crimes, because then the larger picture can be built and Police resources can be allocated. If no crimes are reported then no Police time will be allocated.

The Police explained that theft from person category covers something like a handbag snatch whereas robberies generally include a violent element

Q In John Innes Park a lady was assaulted and punched in the stomach and there were two other incidents with dog walkers being assaulted. Where would this information be found in the statistics handout?

A Constable Carter said that he attended this incident at 7:30 am on the day it happened. This attack has not been repeated and no one has yet been caught. There was technically no incident with the dog walkers although 4 youths riding bikes & wearing balaclavas were stopped and searched. The Police said that they do late night walks through the park and they are aware of drug taking/selling there.

Q Were assaults against persons?

A Police offer to refine the statistics into assaults and violent assaults, which are very low compared to the rest of London.

Q We don't want to give the Police unnecessarily work but maybe once a year statistics could be provided on the assaults, outside domestic violence incidents?

A Police will look into this.

Q Cash for crash – there have been two men on mopeds doing this recently.

A When cameras were put up these crimes died out but now they're starting up again. Please report any of these incidents to the Police so that they can be put in the stats and allocated Police resources. The Police urged people to dial 999 if involved in a cash for a crash incident and also to send in any dash camera footage.

Q What are the success rates for detection and the prosecution for crimes in the area?

A Merton about 12% to 15% of burglary and robbery crimes are solved.

Q If people damage roads are they taken to task?

A If it is not reported then nothing will be done.

The Police noted there is a crack down on graffiti. Please report any on the app 'FixMyStreets'

The Police said that graffiti needs to be cleared quickly so the graffiti 'artists' do not get the rewards and kudos from bragging about their work.

The Police were thanked for their attendance at the meeting

Councillor Edward Foley said that there were letters to be distributed to new voters (*inviting them to join the association*) and ask for helpers to take the task on.

2.0 Morden POP

Councillor Mercer introduced a soap box speaker. In the past, the meetings have given a five minute slot, to people who have a topic that they wish to introduce. This evening Lillian spoke to us about Morden town Centre.

Lillian said the Morden protect our people and planet -Morden POP was founded a few months ago by a local resident. The ideas about Morden Town Centre have been spread by social media and there has been a public meeting. There is a picture emerging - people are keen to identify with Morden and the town centre needs a revamp. It should be a destination for everyone not just local people. The group want to see a holistic development not just piecemeal improvements. Ideas are related to art, culture, innovation and education. Maybe a graffiti cleaning day - with 215,000 people in Borough if each one helped for 15minutes a year we could achieve a lot.

Lillian explained that the group would like help from the Residents Association - on how to get things done. For instance we need to have an accurate and detailed map of the area for a start. Also we need to set up a formal structure but one with minimal red tape. We hope to have a *meeting* on Thursday 3rd April.

People are passionate about the local area and Morden has strong links with the past - the Suffragettes, William Wilberforce and the motto of Wimbledon is 'Strength in freedom'

Lillian handed out a QR code for more information.

It was noted that Morden has a Town Centre manager.

3.0 Councillor Edward Foley's Report

Councillor Foley said the he had been doing lots of casework- all sorts of things from trees, parking tickets & Thames Water bills. Councillor Foley referred the lady to Wimbledon Guild because Thames Water is not in Councillors remit. It was noted that low water users with a water meter have lower bills. However it is now difficult to get a meter installed.

Councillor Foley attended the full Council meeting to approve the Budget and increase council tax. There was a cross party motion with the Conservatives, Lib Dems and Independents opposing the Labour motion that the opposition parties can only oppose one motion a year. Also Labour are limiting the number of call ins a year. This system has not been abused in the past so we opposed this idea. However the motion failed despite support from our MP Paul Kohler. The Independent Residents have one motion a year now. Councillor Foley is Chair of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Police Borough Commander will be *.at Cllr Foley's next meeting.....*and will take questions, but not about The Study school accident, which is an ongoing investigation. There is £155m hole in the funding for the Police and the futures of the Wimbledon & Mitcham Police stations are in doubt.

In John Innes Park on Thursday at 2pm there will be a commemoration of Covid with the planting of a yellow heart. Fred Rayner said that there was a *planter* in Kendor Gardens.

Councillor Foley said that our next meeting in April will be at the Old Ruts - we have use of the downstairs area.

4.0 Councillor Stephen Mercer's Report

I've had a message via WhatsApp that there was a hit and run this evening, on a car in Mostyn Road, registration OX23 GPJ and a resident has submitted a witness statement to the Police . If you know the owner of this car, they can go to the Police and get the information to make a claim against the person who hit their car.

Changes to the constitution of the Council - the general issue is that meetings are too long. Everyone is trying to make sure the meetings are shorter and put in toilet breaks.

I would like to bring you up to speed with developments on issues I mentioned last time.

You may remember that there was a rough sleeper in Kendor Gardens that was causing some concern. He appears to have moved on. (Fred R and David M – any comment?)

In relation to the dangerous parking in Daybrook Road, the relevant officer has confirmed his view that double yellow lines will have to be added to ensure parking on only one side. He has asked for this to be scheduled for formal consultation, in May, or latest in September.

I have also asked about parking at the Morden end of Kenley Road. Some residents there have campaigning for more parking restrictions. It is affected by many similar issues to Daybrook, so I think the same officer is planning to consult on an extension of the CPZ there.

I was due to be meeting the new Morden Town Centre manager again. However, she has postponed until she has more guidance from the relevant cabinet member. It is disappointing as we had agreed to keep in regular contact and I shall be chasing her – as ward councillors for Morden Town Centre we should be consulted with and kept firmly in the loop.

Toilets? No news this month. The Minister postponed the Whitehall meeting. The Mayor said he has no issues lasting 3 hours without a loo break, but the issue is still being considered by the cabinet.

Street trees – I am in communication with the relevant officer (Andrew Kaufmann) but he has not produced anything very constructive yet. I continue to chase.

The Peel House/Sainsburys car park -perhaps you remember that I asked Merton's legal team to give a definitive answer on the situation for the access road. I have had a couple of meetings with the relevant lawyer and the summary of the response is that there are very limited obligations on anyone to maintain that road. This makes sense, in that it explains why it is in such a bad state. However, it is clearly unsatisfactory. I am planning to argue for TFL to either maintain and police it or assign the rights to Merton to police it. Watch this space.

I mentioned some residents in Watery Lane with a problem development. The residents and I continue to work on enforcement of the Conservation Area restrictions.

A last point: you might have seen that we have some new parking bays for electric rental bikes. There is one at the Civic Centre, one outside of the Nelson Hospital and a third outside Dorset Hall on Kingston Road. As these are public spaces the Council has decided to mark these out in broadly sensible spaces of their own bat. However, my understanding is that a similar number of spaces will be found on roads, ie on the carriageway. Here they will be competing with car parking spaces and in some roads that is easier to do than in others. Neither Ed nor I have been informed about any such spaces have been identified in Merton Park so far. I understand why, and my preference is for bikes to be parked on the road instead of just left on the pavement but the devil is in the detail.

There is no doubt that some cyclists will be more willing to use the identified parking spaces than others. I have emailed the cabinet member asking for information – watch this space.

Everyone will have seen the new flowers emerging in our verges. As promised, I have raised the subject of the timing of the mowing of the verges and have been told that they will be addressed at the end of May, hopefully not too early but also not allowing them to grow out of control.

The Borough is paid about £230 a year for each electric rental bike that is on the streets.

Q Any news on the tram stop at Morden Road?

A No. The new executive director has started but is sadly too busy to do anything at the moment.

There is no progress on the John Innes Park footpath which now has dead trees and compacted soil where it is used by the school boys for transferring between the two sites. Sadly, the school has not done anything about the state of the footpath, especially all the rubbish from the boys who use the footpath as a play area, not just to transit between the sites. We may need to write a letter from MPWRA to the chair of governors about this.

There was a discussion about Rutlish & Ricards Lodge form sixth form. It started with 20 children and now has over 600

Q How many charging points for electric cars are there in the borough and who chooses where they are put in?

A We have more charging points than other Boroughs. The Cabinet member decides where the charging points go and lots of lamposts are used as charging points, but we also need to get some more fast charge points. You can apply for chargers to be put in your area. The technology is changing rapidly and better charging points are coming along. The Council may be waiting to get faster and cheaper technology. There is a trial of ducting, so *residents* can use cheap electricity from home and run a cable through the duct in the pavement, to their car.

Q Tree polling pollarding? There is a tree on the corner of Poplar and *Erridge* Road which is growing into a residents house.

A If the tree is less than 1 m away from the house, it will be done straight away. Please email Councillor Foley to get this done.

There will be an increase in charges to put in a planning application from April this year so please be aware of this if you are just about to submit a planning application.

5.0 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 1st April at Old Ruts in Poplar Road