

Merton Park Ward Residents Association meeting
Tuesday 2nd September 2025 8 pm Merton Park Primary School

Present David Merriman, Fred Rayner, Hubert Child, Dese Child, Councillor Edward Foley, Neaz Ahmed, Peter Southgate, Pauline Lightfoot, Bryan Anderson, Stephen Johnson, Greg Bryant, Chris Stutt, Krysia Williams

Apologies Mariam Ali Putter-Gill, Councillor Stephen Mercer

1.0 Welcome

David Merriman welcomed everyone and said that Mariam had been unable to attend the meeting at the last moment and sent apologies. He also said that there was no speaker tonight.

2.0 Councillor Stephen Mercer's report

What AGAIN??? Yes, I can only apologise that Mariam is forced to read this out to you. This time I would like to blame my wife who kindly arranged a week for us in Majorca 'at the end of August'. However, it was clearly my fault that I did not add 2 and 2 together and realise that I would be away for today's meeting.

Sorry.

What have I been doing? Here are a few pointers –

Trees –

Ed and I both mentioned the poor water deprived street trees in the last meeting. Some of you remember seeing some effort to water them by council staff. However in the south of the ward (Poplar Road, Grasmere Avenue, Windermere) residents are convinced they did not see any watering. Not only have residents been watering trees near them; some have even taken to knocking on doors of their neighbours to encourage them to do the same! I have been chasing the main officer responsible (Andrew Kaufmann) for some sort of evidence that watering has happened. It would be nice to think that the rain we have experienced in recent weeks might save the trees but the fear is that it is a bit too late...

Transport –

I spent some time last week with the new Cabinet member for transport, Stuart Neaverson, pointing at some local issues.

E bikes at Rutlish – I complimented him that the new parking areas for e-bikes have been an improvement on the previous situation. However, the mass of such bikes which get dumped outside Rutlish is a serious problem. He acknowledged this and thinks they might have a solution – I think Ed can describe the plans more completely than me.

Access to the tram from Dorset Road – again Ed is leading on this and can tell you more. The cabinet member was interested and positive.

School streets – he is impressed by the yellow painted posts. (These were originally a recommendation of the Sustainable Communities Panel when he was the chair of the Panel.) You will remember us discussing these in previous meeting. The idea is that making the school streets more obvious will help visitors avoid unnecessary tickets; local residents know where the restrictions are but it should help friends, family and service providers – like carers or plumbers. The 2 posts next to the Nelson were omitted and he is going to try to arrange for those to be painted as well. I have arranged for the impact of the new bright posts to be monitored (ie how many tickets before and after the change) and, if they are effective, he is keen to look at rolling them out across Merton.

Toilets –

The installation at Morden station is progressing and I am pushing to learn more about what is happening. I had difficulty getting anywhere with TfL during the holidays but will push hard upon my return.

As you can imagine, the larger parties will be clamouring to claim a part in the success when the toilets are completed. The reality is that it is mainly down to TfL and to a small extent down to a local residents association at the end of the Northern line..

There has been an attempt to relaunch the Community Toilet Scheme in Merton which has not been going well. Senior officers are supportive in theory but no money has been committed to improving provision. Ed and I are wondering if this might be a subject on which we might get universal support – watch this space.

Morden Town Centre Manager –

I met Azra, who spoke to us a few months ago. She is actively looking at meanwhile improvements in Morden and you should expect to see changes over the Autumn, particularly in relation to some sort of street market in Abbotsbury Road, which you will recall I originally suggested. I hope to have more news in October.

Constitutional changes –

Since last May or June there have been changes which affect our ability to speak in meetings and to raise motions. All opposition parties opposed these changes but the Labour administration forced them through. MPWRA has never raised a lot of motions but now we are limited to 1 per

year. Speaking is limited to 1 minute on many occasions. We are fighting these changes and would like to overturn them.

Another of the changes is that there is now more time in Council meetings for residents to ask questions. This means that for issues that MPWRA wants to raise and call for action it might sometimes make more sense for questions to be raised by members. Ed and I can support and advise on such questions. There is also the right to raise a supplementary question in the Council meeting, if a resident's question has been accepted and addressed. If you have a question which you think might be worth asking in the meeting, please drop Ed and me a line. Questions need to be submitted about 2 weeks before the next meeting. The next council meeting is on 17th September.

Politics –

With the rise of Reform, the weakness of the Conservative party and the challenges faced by the Labour government, Councillors in other Wards are very conscious of the prospect of the election next May. No-one knows if Labour will keep their majority and the prospect of the MPWRA holding the balance of power is more realistic than for a number of years. Councillors from other parties are much more keen to be friendly with Ed and me these days!

Realistically I suppose there will be more reason for other parties to break into Merton Park and we might face more of a battle next year. Your support will, as always, be vital next Spring and we shall start planning our campaign after Christmas. Needless to say, I am not planning to be on holiday for any more monthly meetings between now and next May!

I look forward to seeing you in October. In the meantime please do not hesitate to email me with any concerns.

Thankyou.

3.0 Councillor Edward Foley's report

Councillor Foley welcomed everyone back after this summer break.

Councillor Foley attended AFC Wimbledon celebration for their promotion, on the 30th July at Morden Park House.

Councillor Foley also spoke at the Vicar John Heywood's retirement celebrations.

Councillor Foley presented prizes at the cricket club which is run by Surrey Cricket. There were lots of local families present and it was good PR exercise exercise for Merton Park Ward Residents Association.

Lime bikes – not a success. The Overview and Scrutiny committee wrote to Lime bikes about discarded bikes and hacked bikes. The hacked bikes give clicking sounds.

Riders must at least 18 years old to ride them. However lots of these bikes are discarded by the school because the school boys can ride them for free. Lime said that they can probably sort the problem by the end of September. As school goes back on Thursday, we will see what happens. These bikes are causing problems across the Borough - a boy rider was taken to hospital this summer.

Nelson Health Centre Blue Badge users were getting fines using the car park because they did not realise they had to register their car numberplate. Users were very upset and they are the sort of people who do not use email et cetera, so Councillor Foley has been helping them.

Daybrook Road – The Evans and Day site is being developed into storage units and nine flats. However work to remove big petrol tanks there is causing vibrations and upsetting neighbours. Council visited the site but it is okay and the developers are communicating with residents.

Phone box in Kingston Road will be used as a little library. Residents would like to remove Kenley Road/Circle Gardens modern phone box, because it is always being vandalised and has rubbish in it. In fact scales and drug paraphernalia have been found and there is unsightly graffiti on the phone box. Councillor Foley has let BT know about the box's drug use.

VJ Day celebrations at the Civic Centre where the flag was flown and the Saturday after VJ Day there was a walk and talk at Wimbledon Memorial.

Wimbledon and Mitcham Police stations are closing despite a petition to keep them open. On the 19th of September there was a meeting after the full Council of meeting, called by the Lib Dems and not a single Councillor that was in favour of the closures. There was a discussion about Police stations and the 'satellite' stations. Councillor Foley said that there was low morale and low salaries in the Police force and they were losing good people and spending time investigating social media crime. Police stations are useful to report things and they are always busy. CS reported that she had found a knife in the road while on holiday in Poole after a lot of effort it turned out that someone had been high on drink & drugs and threatening people in the neighbourhood with a knife. This resulted in a crime number being given to the incident and CS was able to then contact the Police via the crime number and offered to take the knife to the Police station where it was gratefully received. Councillor Foley said that the neighbourhood Police were used when they were big events like Notting Hill Carnival leaving 2 PCSO's on duty in the Borough.

Music in the Park - the fountain was not working but is now fixed. Andrew Kaufman sorted out in 48 hours.

The path between the recreation ground and the school is earth after the boys had worn the grass away, so now Rutlish is paying for a fence and it will be reseeded sometime.

Merton Pride this weekend there will be a march from Morden Hall Park. The money is from sponsorship and 106 money, not the Council.

Seventh Big Sports Day, which is a fun event this coming weekend.

Residents have planted lots of bulbs in the grass verges so have asked for them to be reinstated after the gas board has dug a lot of them up. It was noted that the grass verges have been cut when they have been worn away over the drought summer.

End of Dorset Road - people are going over the corners - five vehicles in seven minutes cut over the footpath, so bollards are needed here.

Silver Sunday, on 5th of October- addresses the problem of loneliness in people over 65 years old. Residents have a good time - live music, singing at the Tooting Hub in Bishopsford Road

Q Bryan Anderson Nelson Hospital footpath emergency work for a collapsed sewer - someone cut through the barriers and fell and was lying on the pavement for awhile, before they were found.

Q £95 per year to have the garden waste removed (£75 in Wandsworth Borough) a resident has asked about using the service for six months a year because the gardener comes on a bike and can't take the waste away. However the Council have not come back to them yet.

A Councillor Foley suggests that copies of emails are sent to him and add your address to the email. This will allow Councillor Foley to follow up if there is no reply.

Q WhatsApp group suggest that toilets will be available at Morden station at the end of October?

Q Councillor Foley was thanked by a resident - for being able to add a visitors car into the school street scheme

Dorset Road was efficiently resurfaced along with gas replacement work which was done by vacuum extraction lorries.

Note that Gas Works start 8th to 24th of August but have not had any confirmation yet - the pipework is at least 100 years old.

Road signs are being renovated. John Innes park one has been done - thank you to Steve Baldrick.

Pathway is bad in the footpath by 186 Kenley Road

School Street fines - the freedom of information request question w

ould reveal this is money making scheme for the Council. More awareness needs to be made of school streets. 'What do they know.com' to ask for a freedom of information question?

4.0 Any other business

Neaz Ahmed said that the community garden in Mostyn Gardens will have an Open Day this Saturday 12pm to 4pm and would be attended by the Mayor. There will be karaoke and food.

Edward Foley asked for help delivering new voter letters.

5.0 Date of next meeting

Tuesday 7th October new venue OLD RUTS in Poplar Road 8 pm.