

## **MERTON PARK WARD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION**

### **Minutes of meeting at Old Ruts Tuesday 3rd February 8pm 2026**

**Present** David Merriman, Councillor Stephen Mercer, Councillor Edward Foley ( second half), Fred Rayner, Stephen Johnson, Pauline Lightfoot, Peter Southgate, Bryan Anderson, Neaz Ahmed, Hubert Child, Dese Child, Ian Garbett, Greg Bryant, Chris Stutt

**Apologies** Krysia Williams, Jolanta Novak

#### **1.0 Welcome**

Acting Chair David Merriman welcomed everybody to our new hopefully permanent venue Old Ruts. DM said that because the Chair Mariam Ali-Puttergil had to step down suddenly in December due to work commitments, DM would be Interim Chair until after the elections on 7th May

#### **2.0 Minutes of the last meeting**

The Minutes of the 2nd December 2025 meeting were agreed and signed. DM said that the local elections are on 7th May - every 4 years. The Residents Association machinery will be in action but some of the cogs are rusty or missing, so please volunteer to help with the variety of tasks from leaflet deliveries to canvassing.

#### **3.0 Bert Johnson**

Hubert Child announced that one of our long term supporters Bert Johnson had died in December. He had in fact been Chairman of Acas in his working life. He helped with political insight when we first got Bridget Smith elected in 1989.

#### **3.0 Councillor Stephen Mercer's Report**

Councillor Mercer introduced Julie .... & Helen ... from Cannon Hill who have just set up a Residents Association there. They are here tonight to learn what we do.

Councillor Mercer explained that because of the confidential nature of some of the work he does he cannot talk about a lot of the details.

Councillor Mercer had had a meeting with the **hotel** developers in January. Planning permission for the hotel was received in early January because of delays due to concerns about the roof line. The contractor is Red Construction which specialises in building hotels. The contractor will be signed off in a couple of weeks - when all the backers who are providing the finance have agreed to it. The waste water needs to be redirected and Thames Water cannot start work until Windermere Road is closed for 2 weeks 16/2/26 to 1/3/26. The building work will take 15-16 months and will include auger piling which is less noisy.

#### **Article 4 Directive.**

The **Post Office in Morden** was almost redeveloped under the permitted development rights. An Article 4 directive covering an area stops "Permitted Development". If an Article 4 directive is taken out when building work has started the owner can sue the Council - which is an unknown risk for the Council. If notice of an application of an Article 4 directive is given then the Council cannot be sued. A senior Officer at the Council said that an Article 4 paper is going to the Cabinet - it will be Borough wide and cover HMOs and later will cover all developments which have permitted development rights. It will be about 18 months before this happens.

**Jane Asher** has been honoured in the Swim England Hall of Fame, which honours individuals whose contributions have made a lasting impact on English aquatics. With more than 100 World Aquatic Masters world records and numerous world titles to her name the recognition celebrates

Jane's remarkable achievements and dedication to the sport and she still swims at Morden Leisure Centre each week

**Q** Is the Post Office owner also the owner of the other shops next to it ?

**A** No. There are different Freeholders along the parade.

**Q** Which brand/chain is the Hotel ?

**A** Probably confidential information - not a budget brand and not a well known one.

**Toilets** - Morden station toilet was subject to final checks and issues were found. There is no opening date as yet.

**Council recently sold a business for £186m.** The money has been invested and put towards reducing Council debt and building houses. Some very expensive houses (approx £750,000) have been built on a site in Mitcham.

There is a £50m legacy fund where the Council chooses work to be done and residents can vote on the various options. The first tranche of money is £3m for things which probably should be done anyway in the Council budget. Please look at the options on the website - note it is not easy to vote and voting closes on 3rd March.

Fred Rayner has been trying to get water in Kendor Gardens - there is a supply to the park but it is not accessible. Sadly this has not been included in the options. There is a further £12m to spend.

**High Path** - school streets signs are more visible because the posts have been painted yellow and this has reduced the number of fines issued.

**Merantum Way & Station Road pedestrian crossing** proposed. It is likely to affect the old historic archway there. Could we move the entire arch to save it ? Please look at proposals and let Councillor Mercer know your views.

Councillor Mercer on Sustainable Communities Scrutiny committee - 300 page report so difficult to read & make meaningful comments.

Full Council meeting tomorrow evening and a Budget meeting at the end of February - will be asking for money for toilets. There is 1 vote between Labour and all the other parties and maybe 2 votes now that the deputy Lib Dem Councillor has moved to New Zealand.

**Q** K5 bus uses Windermere Avenue so where will it be rerouted when Windermere is closed for 2 weeks ?

**A** Not sure.

**Q** Is there money for the Community toilet scheme ?

**A** There is a bottleneck in information coming from the Council - it all has to go via one person! There is an Officer working on this but there were no incentives to offer business to join the scheme.

**Q** Bid for Civic fund money ?

**A** No answer on this before the elections

It was noted that the Church Lane wall & Merton Abbey wall have been on the at risk register for the last 40-50 years with no funding for work on them.

It was noted that Mark Robinson at the Council gave a resident a new Neighbourhood Watch sign for Wessex Avenue and told the resident to install it on lamppost 2.3m from ground.

**David Merriman** said that the Police were not able to attend this meeting but will attend the March meeting. He recommended signing up to the Met Engage e mail alerts which detailed the work of the local Police.

He noted that his grandparents bought a new house in Erridge Road in 1926 which looked out over fields. It was a time of significant change and massive development. That was 100 years ago. Now the Government is undertaking a planning consultation the overall theme of which is densification

especially in areas around stations. 99% of planning applications are decided by Officers and almost all are approved.

Densification is the driver - especially on brown field sites and around stations. The weight of the Local Plan is much reduced, to speed up the process and design codes favour densification - see Colliers Wood and Sutton for examples.

Note on 1st May **the new Renters Rights Act** comes into force. Amongst many new regulations and obligations if a landlord forgets to issue a form to a tenant they can be fined £3,000 and up to £40,000. No fault evictions will no longer be allowed.

#### **4.0 Councillor Edward Foley's report**

Councillor Foley is on a Compulsory Purchase task group. He is also looking at impact assessment on calling in Cabinet decisions.

Last week there was a planning application for 294 housing units on the old **Raynes Park station industrial site**. As it is a very narrow road, Councillor Foley asked for a better footpath and lighting.

There were no social housing units proposed because they were not economic. Councillor Foley suggested that the Council buy some units with the section 106 money - which Council have done.

Councillor Foley attended the **Holocaust Memorial Day** - all faiths attended and it was a worthwhile event

**Bakers End** - there has been a skip on the pavement for quite a while. Councillor Foley asked people to report things like this on the app '**Fix My Street**' because then there is a traceable record, which can be followed up.

#### **Bus routes**

There has been a lot of talk about closure of certain bus routes. GoAhead and TfL are renegotiating contracts and all the bus routes will still be running. With the slow traffic- 20mph restrictions, buses are fined if they are too slow, so this is part of the renegotiations.

Councillor Foley said that if residents sign a petition which is related to a political party then they will get e mails from that party later.

Q Any progress on the pathway to the Tram ?

A No - Officer delayed by problems.

#### **5.0 Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 3rd March at Old Ruts 7.45pm for 8pm 2026