

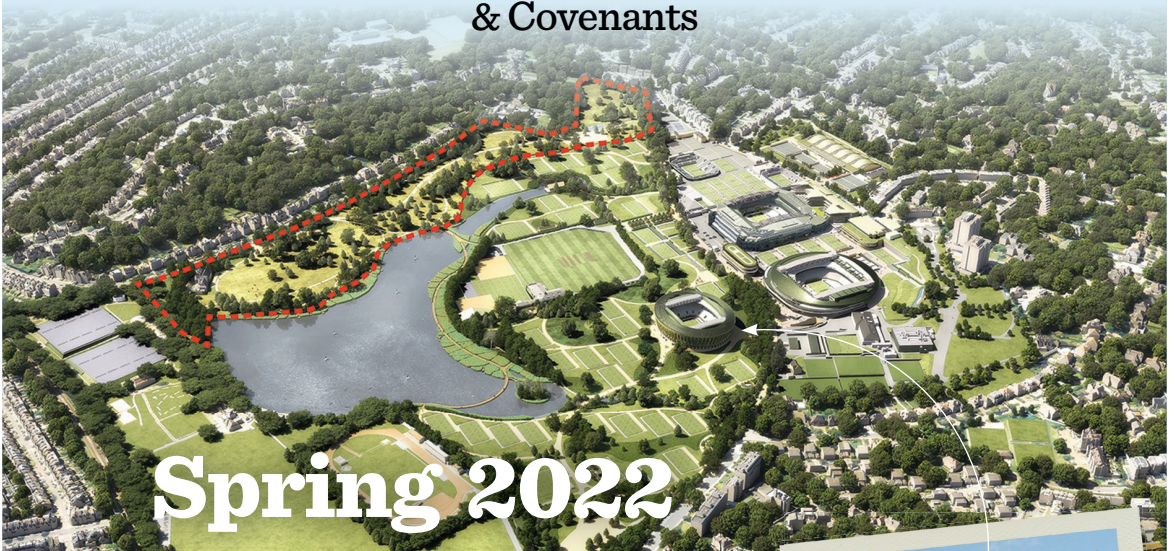


# Wimbledon Park Residents' Association



## ‘Save Wimbledon Park’

Metropolitan Open Land (Green Belt)  
Capability Brown Grade II\* Listed Park  
Protected by National and Local Planning Rules  
& Covenants



AELTC Proposals for Wimbledon Park Golf Course

**FOR**



**AGAINST**



Images courtesy AELTC



Proposed 8,000-seat show court  
Artist's impression

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# **Easter edition 2022**

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**Cover page image (extracted from the presentation information on the AELTC website) shows the layout of the proposed new courts and landscaping on the golf course. The red dotted line represents the new proposed parkland area.**

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## **Chairman's Report**

### **AELTC proposals for Wimbledon Park Golf Course**

The umbrella group of Residents' Associations and The Wimbledon Society continues to meet regularly to consider both the AELTC Planning Application and also the matter of the Covenants. The date for the Planning Applications Committee (PAC) meeting to discuss the proposals for the Wimbledon Park Golf Course has yet to be determined. Our reasonable expectation is that it will be after the May elections and possibly be in June.

Since my report in the Christmas newsletter, several important issues have been discussed but perhaps the most important is the matter of the Covenants contained in the transfer deed of sale of the Golf Course to the AELTC. A great deal of research has been carried out by members of the group and finally it was decided that we should seek an opinion from Leading Counsel. This we did in February. In short, Counsel's opinion was that the material we had supplied, in particular the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee and others we had included, presented strong contemporary evidence of intentions and that the current development proposals submitted by the AELTC would be in breach of the Covenants.

Since then we have written to the Council (written by The Wimbledon Society on behalf of the group for the third time) emphasising our arguments and advising them that this was based on legal opinion we had received. Our letter was acknowledged but we have yet to receive any assurance from the Council that they will enforce the Covenants.

It was interesting to note that at the Council meeting on the 2nd February, an important motion was put forward by Cllr Kohler (Lib Dem) that the Council should commit to 'enforcing' the Covenants contained in the transfer deed of sale of the WP Golf Course in 1993 to the AELTC. An amended motion was put forward by the Council changing the word 'enforce' to 'respect'. This motion was carried by a Labour majority. The Conservative group abstained from voting. Despite the Council stating that the planning application and covenant were two separate issues, the speeches made by Cllr Allison and Cllr Fraser confused the two topics and clearly indicated they were in favour of the AELTC proposals and were equivocal about the enforcement of the Covenants.

We also wrote a letter to the Chairman of the AELTC advising them of the position as we see it, based on our advice from Counsel. An acknowledgment of the letter has been received but there has been no substantive response to the contents.

Directly related, you will see on pages 8, 10 and 11, an exchange between myself and John Elvidge, who was a Councillor at the time of the sale of the Golf Club and, as an opposition member at that time, opposed the sale. This simply reinforces the



concerns that were held at that time by Councillors, the community at large, this association and Wimbledon House RA about the future intentions of the AELTC, despite what was being said in public and the assurances that were given.

The issues involved here are extremely important. Countrywide there are major attempts to build on green belt and other protected land all the time. We have had major support from the Campaign to Protect Rural England which is at the forefront of working with individual communities to oppose inappropriate development and protect open land. We need to value our open space 'now' and ensure its protection for future generations.

As a result, we are initiating a new campaign called 'Save Wimbledon Park'.

We do not underestimate the difficulties of fighting major inappropriate development by major companies and private wealthy organisations. We are currently investigating the best way to form a body which will be in a position to pursue major fundraising, should we need to take any further legal action.

Recent Media release from CPRE

**WIMBLEDON PARK (Merton)**

*Alice Roberts of CPRE London:* "Meanwhile, in Merton, the All England Lawn Tennis Club, which runs the Wimbledon Tournament, is making a bid to take over neighbouring Wimbledon Park."

*Iain Simpson, Chair Wimbledon Park Residents' Association:* "Precious Open Spaces like Wimbledon Park are the lungs of our great city; irreplaceable habitats for thousands of creatures; views and vistas appreciated and enjoyed by all. The AELTC's proposals will destroy this with 8 years of building works to create an industrial tennis entertainment complex for the use of elite players 18/365 days, just 5% of the year. We are enormously grateful for CPRE's support to 'Save Wimbledon Park!'."

**CPRE New report called 'Forever Green'**

**"10. Wimbledon Park (Merton) METROPOLITAN OPEN LAND PUBLIC PARK** The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) wishes to expand the Wimbledon Tournament site into a section of Wimbledon Park which to date has been a private golf course with provision for public access. Plans include a new 8,000 seat stadium, 10 other private buildings, 9.4 kms of roads and paths and 38 tennis courts, none of which will be available to the public. Local campaigners point out this is protected Metropolitan Open Land, a Grade II\* listed park, also subject to restrictive covenants, which should never be built on, and that the development will have a devastating impact on the historic Capability Brown landscape. Although a small part of the land is being offered as a 'permissive' park, permission could be withdrawn at any time and no access will be allowed when tennis is played elsewhere."

Best wishes for Easter

Iain Simpson

## **Update from Stephen Hammond MP**

I am writing this article in mid-March, after three weeks of an event that I didn't think anyone really expected to see happen. The aggressive actions of Putin have shocked us all. The determination of the Ukrainians to repel the attack is inspiring. Last week I had the chance to hear first hand from 4 MPs from Ukraine. The MP from Kharkov told me her constituency had been consistently bombed and much was reduced to rubble. The MP from Kyiv spoke of the prospect of a Russian siege.

It has been encouraging to see the initial response of the UK, US and the EU in taking action to sanction Russia and help Ukraine. I have lobbied the Government about the need for generosity and support for those fleeing the conflict. I am delighted that my former colleague Richard Harrington is now organising the operational response. I am pleased that the sponsorship route is being made easier. The Homes for Ukraine scheme will allow anyone to sponsor a refugee for a minimum of six months. Sally and I have signed up to the scheme and I urge all who can help to sign up here. <https://www.gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine>

The major local issues are the elections to be held on May 5<sup>th</sup> and the All England application for development of the golf course. Whilst the application has some positive elements, especially the creation of a new public access park, the application in its current form is too large in scale and there are too many courts and buildings. I have been working with Residents' Associations and others to ensure that the concerns about the number of courts, the siting of the maintenance building and the size of the proposed show court are fully expressed to the AELTC. I think the application in its current form is not acceptable and I hope a modified proposal which meets local residents' approval can be reached. Separately there is a covenant which protects the parkland from building. My Council colleagues and I have been urging the local Council to ensure that they enforce the covenant. Unfortunately at the Council Meeting of Feb 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Labour Council supported by the Lib Dems undermined the intent of the covenant by voting merely to "respect"

not “enforce”. You can find my statements on this development here: <https://www.stephenhammond.net/news/category/Local-News>

Local politics is about just that – local matters. Your local representative takes up your concerns about planning, street cleaning, housing, parks and any number of other local issues. Wimbledon Park is fortunate to have three excellent local Councillors in Ed Gretton, Janice Howard and Oonagh Moulton and I wish them all well in the local election.

Finally, Covid restrictions have finally been lifted but the virus is still with us. So I urge everyone who is not vaccinated to do so. More information can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

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**An important, contemporaneous, account from John Elvidge who was a Councillor involved in the discussions and decisions at the time of the sale of Wimbledon Park Golf Course in 1993**

**Dear Iain,**

**Thank you for sending me the Minutes of the Council decisions in 1993 which have helped greatly in refreshing my memory of what happened over the sale of the freehold. As you know I was then the Leader of the Opposition (Conservative) having previously been Leader of the Council in 1988-1990. We lost the 1990 election to the Labour Party, and they had a healthy majority. We opposed the sale of the freehold vigorously, and, I believe, were instrumental in obtaining the protective covenant, since we were in no doubt that the All England Club would at some time in the future seek to build on the land.**

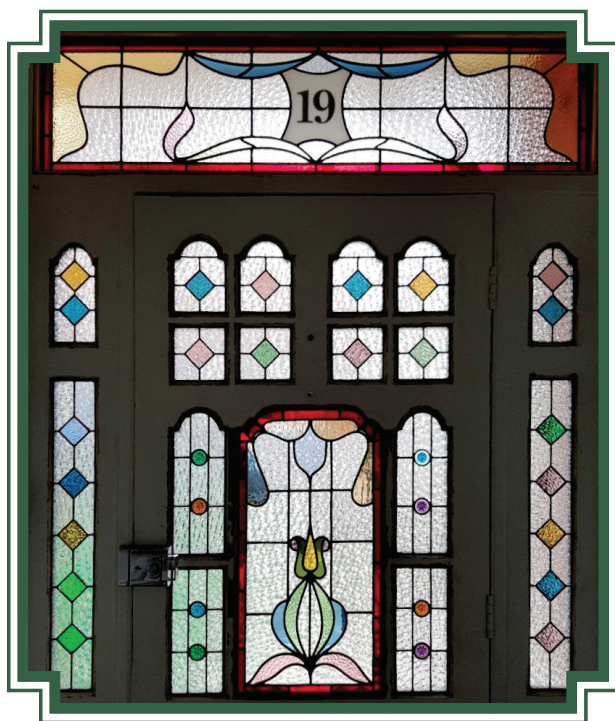
**What follows is my recollection, supported by the recollections of Councillor Barry Edwards who was the shadow opposition spokesman on the Leisure Services Committee. I have asked Theresa May for her assistance, but she takes the view, understandably, that she does not want to encroach on the constituency affairs of Stephen Hammond MP. She did, however, set up a meeting for me with Stephen. Both of them lived near Wimbledon Park and strongly opposed the sale, and so represented the views of the local community as the two Councillors for Durnsford Ward.**

**The Labour Party were determined to increase the Council's reserves, to make up what they saw as the reduction in government rate support grant. There was a blind auction of the freehold, with, I understand, only two bidders, the underbidder being the Wimbledon Park Golf Club which held the lease, then running until 2041. It proved not to be a renewable business tenancy.**

**It is very important to note that the price paid by the All England Club had to be certified by the Director of Development, under a section of, I think, the**



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Local Government Act, as being the best price that could be reasonably obtainable. The sale price was so certified on the basis that the land had been marketed and sold on the clear basis that the land had to be retained as open land, never to be built on or developed in any way, because of its historic park status and since it was Metropolitan Open Land. Had development been a real possibility, the land would have been many, many times more valuable than the price paid, since it is in one of the most expensive residential areas in London.

The Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee on 31 March 1993 show that the freehold of the Golf Course land was declared surplus to the Committee's requirements, and that we, as the opposition, dissented. Barry Edwards and I were members who dissented.

The decision was then approved by the Administration and Land Subcommittee which declared the land surplus to Council requirements and agreed to dispose of it. There followed a public meeting which was addressed by a member of the local Residents' Associations. The Policy and Resources Committee on 27 April 1993 decided in the light of the representations made "in order to ensure that there is no misunderstanding or possible misinterpretation either by residents OR ANY POSSIBLE PURCHASER OF THE SITE [emphasis added] ...to add a further covenant preventing any building other than building which is ancillary to recreation or open space use and which will not impair public appreciation of the extent or openness of the land. This provides clarification of the Council's commitment to the open aspect of the Golf Course in the event of any disposal".

Reference is then made to the fact that the site is MOL and its use was protected within the UDP. It was also identified as of Special Historic Interest.

The Minutes note that: "Some Opposition Members have suggested that the All England Lawn Tennis Club will take the opportunity of extending its operations across Church Road into the Park. Apart from the various restrictions we have placed on the sale to prevent inappropriate develop-

ment, we have noted the contents of a letter received from the All England Club regretting any concern caused to its neighbours in this matter. The Club may wish to show an interest in the freehold of the land primarily to protect its current temporary parking needs in the long term".

Opposition Members unsuccessfully moved a reference back. This was because we doubted the long term intentions of the Club.

Sadly we have been proved right in our concerns. The then Chairman gave full assurances in his public letter as to the Club's intentions, stating that: "We completely understand and support everyone's determination to keep the land open and we purchased the land on that basis". But the current Chairman airily states that these commitments no longer hold good after 28 years because times change, and because the present wishes of the Club, a private enterprise, are to expand.

The terms of the sale, and the covenant freely accepted by the Club, were designed to protect the open aspect of the land in perpetuity, and cannot and should not now be completely disregarded. There is no doubt that the present planning application is totally in breach of the conditions under which the land was sold.

I hope this helps.

John

*John Elvidge read Law at Cambridge. He then practised as a barrister and served as a part time Judge for many years. He represented Dundonald Ward on Merton Council from 1978 to 1994. He is the Chairman of the Raynes Park and West Barnes Residents' Association.*

*He is a member both of the Wimbledon Park Golf Club and of the Wimbledon Club.*

## FOWP Spring Report

### Spring has arrived!

The daffodils we planted, both last year and in previous years, are sprouting up all around the park – near the bowls' pavilion, beside the Revelstoke Road entrance and under the veteran oak tree. There are snowdrops and sweet violets too!







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or

Email inquiries to: [wimbledonparkhall@gmail.com](mailto:wimbledonparkhall@gmail.com)

### **Toilet block refurbishment/improvements**

In December we were invited to a preview of the refurbished and improved toilet block prior to their being opened to the public. The contractors had done a really good job within the existing space. All the toilet facilities (ladies, gents, disabled and baby/toddlers' changing room) had been thoughtfully redesigned, nicely updated and brightened up. Thanks to the Wimbledon Park Ward Councillors who were instrumental in getting Merton Council to fund this project. Public toilets seem to be in short supply these days, so we are delighted that Merton Council agreed to provide funding. The exterior is painted in a bright, modern green colour which some people (like me) will love whilst others may have some reservations! It is, however, unmissable! The outside area (fencing etc.) is, as yet, unfinished but will be done when the weather improves. The final touches have now been completed. We hope visitors to the park will be pleased with the new, improved toilets.

### **Dam Safety works**

The dam safety works started in January. I'd like to clear up any confusion that may be out there – the lake is not being desilted; Merton Council are improving and modifying the existing dam to meet statutory safety standards. Unfortunately, to the disappointment of many, the dam promenade walkway had to be closed off completely for a few months even though we had asked the contractors if this could be done in phases. We did, however, succeed in getting the planners to extend the length of the new open stream to join the existing open brook. This will be much more aesthetically pleasing, could reduce flood risk and have enhanced ecological value. The works themselves are due for completion in May 2022.

### **The Pines and Needles site**

Grass seed has been planted on the site used by Pines and Needles over the Christmas period. Apparently, unlike last year, the reseeding has been done correctly this time. Nice to see Pines and Needles keeping the public updated as to what is happening too via a notice. We are told that Merton Council have now put out a tender for other contractors who may be interested in using this site. We'll try our best to get the chosen contractor set up on a hard surface rather than grass next Christmas.



## Nature Blog

Dr. Dave Dawson, our environmental scientist, has been writing a wonderfully informative Nature blog for us for a number of years. However, it is only recently, since our website was updated, that it found a settled 'home'. So, I'm pleased to say that from now on Dr. Dawson's blog has a special place on our website. The latest one, written in February 2022, can be viewed at

<https://davegdawsonwp.blogspot.com>

## New Head of Merton Parks

Andrew Kauffman, previously Head of Greenspaces at Idverde, is now the new Head of Parks at Merton Council. Warmest congratulations, Andrew! We've worked happily with Andrew in the past and we very much look forward to working with him in the future.

## Third response re AELTC plans

We sent in another response re the AELTC planning application to both Merton and Wandsworth Councils. We are seeking to stop AELTC using our public park as a car park during the Championships. This has, over the years, consistently caused damage and restricted public access and enjoyment. Please read the full report on

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/friends-of...>

## Guidance on Commercial Events in the park

One of the topics we have been discussing is our draft proposals covering commercial activities in the park. We are striving to lessen their damaging impact and to minimise disruption to park visitors and local residents. The proposals can be viewed at

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/draft-fowp...>

These are in draft form so comments from you are very much welcomed. You can submit these via our contact form

<https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/contact>

## Storm Eunice

The park was closed on 18 February as Storm Eunice struck. We had thought we lost three trees - one near the brook, another by the Stadium and a third in the Glade near Horse Close Wood. However, it seems five fell in total, with a poplar going down in Horse Close Wood and another Leyland cypress near the stadium. It's always sad to lose trees in this way and we don't know if these will be replaced. Wherever possible, fallen trees are now left to nature as dead-wood supports a diversity of life. A couple of the trees, i.e. near the brook and Athletics Stadium, do still need clearing as they are obstructing pathways around the park. We have been in contact with Idverde about this.

## Tree planting

Good news about tree planting in 2022! The 'Conservation Volunteers' group gave us over 100 tree whips (infant trees) - English Oak, Silver Birch, Aspen, Green Beech, Common Alder, Rowan and Goat Willow. We also bought some Hawthorns and Hornbeams from the Woodland Trust, so, 160 trees in total! Our members and volunteers planted these around the park on 4 & 5 March. We had a fabulous response to our tree planting event. Despite the cold and threatening rain, nothing could dampen the enthusiasm and energy of our wonderful tree planters. Members of FOWP, volunteers, family groups, community groups, children from the Oak Montessori school, the Walk and Talk group and Merton Tree Wardens all worked together purposefully and happily to plant the many whips we acquired. All 160 whips were planted! Many thanks also to Ricardo of Idverde and Martin and the Community Payback Team who moved all the wood chip mulch for us. Without their motorised vehicle we would have been there a lot longer as we only had wheelbarrows! It was also lovely to see Andrew Kauffman, the new Head of Merton Parks, who joined us for this event. It was genuinely uplifting to see everyone avidly digging away, spreading a protective layer of mulch, and finally looking at the end result together. It feels good to be doing something to help mitigate climate change and leave a legacy for future generations. A very big thank you to everyone involved. Fantastic teamwork!





### **Flower beds**

Flower beds have also been dug around the Hornbeams, both to protect the young trees and allow us to plant some cornflowers. The digging was quite hard as the ground was heavily impacted so it will need some finishing off still. The seeds will be planted shortly - date tbd.

We've also put up some new 'please keep off' signs to try and protect the new, young trees.

### **Last of all!**

Our new website is coming along fabulously! We have had lots of positive feedback. Do have a look at it at:

[www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org](http://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org).

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter and Facebook too!

**Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty**  
**FOWP**

## **REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES POSED BY THE AELTC WIMBLEDON PARK PROJECT**

**A year ago, I first contributed to the WPRA Newsletter in an article referring to the prospect of a large development being proposed by the AELTC for the extension of their facilities into the grounds of the Wimbledon Park Golf Club.**

**At the time, the proposals for the site were the subject of a revised Masterplan plan by the owners and were not in the public domain. It was then premature to speculate as to the potential impact that such proposals would have on what was left of the original Wimbledon Park and surrounding areas. In the article we invited our readers to look at the existing Merton Council Planning Policies that refer to Wimbledon Park for guidance as to what could be allowed to take place in such a sensitive location.**

**We mentioned that as the site falls partly within Wandsworth, it was reasonable to assume that both Councils would liaise as necessary to develop a co-ordinated set of policies for this purpose.**

**In connection to Merton Council, we also indicated as a source of reference the New Local Plan whose adoption was expected imminently during Winter 2021.**

**The AELTC WPP phased consultation process lead to their submission in July '21 of hybrid planning applications to LBM and LBW. In the Autumn '21 WPRA Newsletter that followed, we again encouraged our residents to register their comments, observations and representations on any aspect of the applications directly to the Planning Author-ity.**

**To facilitate the understanding of the AELTC WPP proposals and their impact on the environment we published extracts from the application documentation to illustrate the National and Local Designations of the site.**

**In the Christmas '21 issue of the WPRA Newsletter, we published a summary of the representations to the AELTC WPP planning application, highlighting the main topics of concern raised by our neighbours.**

**These included:**

**The 8,000 seats Stadium and impact on MOL, etc.**

**Intensification of Land Use, over development, density, 38 courts, etc.**

**Environment, against NPPF – London Plan – Local Policies, etc.**

**Climate Change, against Merton climate change agenda, etc.**

**Community Related.**

**Church Road Related.**

**Other, breaks legal covenants, disruptions, etc.**

**In percentage terms, of the representations collated by WPRA, 4.7% supported the AELTC WPP proposals, while 95.3% raised objections to the proposals.**

**Most of these objections had been originally raised during the three-phased pre-application Consultation period run by the AELTC. However, none of the representations, comments, suggestions were considered in the formulation of the formal application documentation.**

**A year on from the March '21 article, the great awareness and interest shown by Wimbledon Park area residents and local organisations has kept the progress of the AELTC WPP application pretty much at the centre of attention by our community.**

**It would be reasonable to expect that there would be a response from the AELTC to acknowledge the constructive comments about the proposals made by the community and that this would be reflected in meaningful alterations to the current application proposals.**

**Or is this too much to ask after a so called “consultation period”?**

**We understand now that, as far as the LBM is concerned, the application will not be taken to the Planning Committee for Determination until the May 5<sup>th</sup> Local Elections are out of the way, and the Planning Department Officers have had the opportunity to properly assess and process all necessary planning procedures including responses from statutory and public consultees.**

**As far as we know in the public domain, LBM and LBW have not agreed, as we had hoped a year ago, on a common set of policies to ascertain the merits of the**

**AELTC application, a proposal of enormous impact to both Southfields and Wimbledon Park.**

**This lack of co-ordination between two adjacent local authorities is reflected even in their disagreement on their stand about temporary traffic measures during the AELTC Championships fortnight.**

**We also understand that the adoption by Merton of the New Draft Local Plan 2021, currently subject to the Stage 3, inspection by the independent Inspector, is a process that will not be complete until later in the year at best.**

**WPRA has made representations to the Inspector in connection with the inconsistency of strategies and policies and the introduction of Site Allocation Wi3 appertaining to Wimbledon Park for development. Should the New Local Plan be in place before the AELTC application is taken to Committee?**

**On the assumption that eventually the LBM would be minded to grant a conditional consent for the AELTC WPP application, the application would then be referred to the GLA for determination.**

**In all this process still ahead of us, the active participation of our local community remains of paramount importance.**

**The voice of the residents and local associations and societies will be heard at all the appropriate instances. We also hope to engage the support of our local politicians of all persuasions as well.**

**We expect that, at the end of the debate, a project will emerge for this unique site that will meet the aspirations and requirements of all the community and stakeholders, at the same time becoming a beacon for its contribution towards reversing the effects of climate change.**

**Mario L Avendano, RIBA**



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## Brooklands Avenue Allotments (SW19 8ER)



**We recently rebuilt the three raised beds on this allotment site thanks to a generous grant from the Wimbledon Park Community Trust.**

**The original project to build these raised beds and an all-weather path was funded by the National Lottery to**

**provide keen gardeners with a disability access to an allotment site.**

**If you would like to take on one of the two currently available beds, please contact:**

**Email: [slwpallotments@idverde.co.uk](mailto:slwpallotments@idverde.co.uk) or tel: 020 3876 8806**

**Courtesy of Brooklands Allotment Committee**

## **Wimbledon Park: a tale of many years of promises**

**“There is nothing more valuable to a town, nothing which it is easier to lose and, once lost, more hopeless of restoration than naturally beautiful open spaces” (Wimbledon Borough News, 24.1.1914). Thus encouraged, Wimbledon Corporation bought Wimbledon Park to hold on trust as open space, to be used for leisure and recreation by everyone. Part was a private golf course, so they insisted when renewing the lease to the golf club that Merton residents could play at reduced green fees.**

**Years passed ... Merton Council decided to sell the golf course freehold to raise some money. WPRa and many others feared future development and campaigned to keep it open and undeveloped. Concerned about this special and ancient land, Merton used all their powers to protect it with as many planning rules and designations as could possibly apply. They were honourable to keep to the trust which they had accepted so many years before: they promised WPRa and local bodies to ensure it would never be built upon.**

**“Respecting the wishes of local people, this Council is resolute that the land will be retained as open space. All England has bought the land knowing this is our policy and is aware that we would not allow development of the site. We have placed strong covenants on the sale” (Colman, Leader Merton Council, 23.9.1993).**

**The buyer, who offered more money than anyone else, agreed. He promised in public and in a solemn covenant to keep it open, ensuring it was used only for leisure or recreational purposes. He would even dedicate a special walkway all around the lake.**

**“We completely understand and support everyone’s determination to keep the land open and we have purchased on that basis” (Currie, Chairman, All England Club, 24.9.1993).**

**Just a few years later ... a huge project is proposed, which will break the covenants so willingly given within living memory.**

**“As to the assurances made in 1993, I am sure you can appreciate that the requirements of the Club have developed in the resulting 28 years” (Hewitt, Chairman, All England Club, 13.7.2021 to Simpson, Chairman, WPRa).**

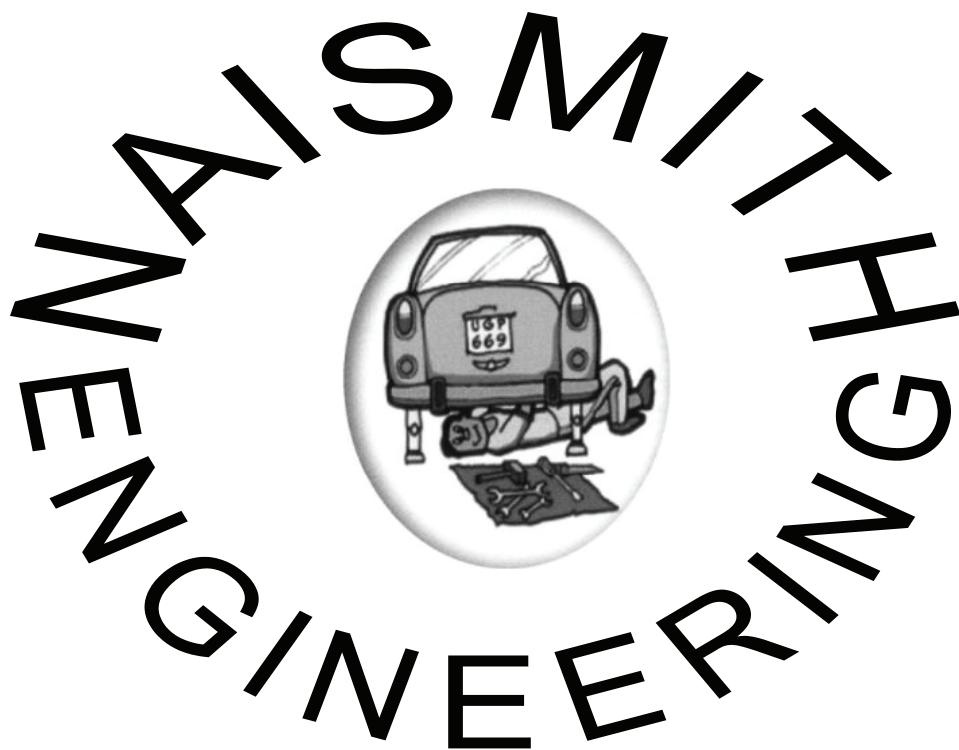
**What should Merton Council say to you? What should it say to the All England Club with whom it is in very close contact? What should the All England Club say to you? What is the right and proper thing to do ... respect the obligations or ignore them? Instead ... silence ... nothing.**

**Now ... WPRa consult an eminent lawyer. He says that the development cannot and should not happen like this. The trust must be honoured. Merton and the All England Club should comply with their commitments; the All England Club should come up with something more in keeping with the covenants.**

**Wimbledon Park Residents’ Association and many local and national bodies are campaigning on behalf of all of us to right this wrong.**

**Save Wimbledon Park!**

**Christopher Coombe**



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## Wimbledon Park Councillors' update – Easter 2022

Dear residents,

Some updates for everyone in Wimbledon Park:

**Haydons Road Shopping Parade – Complete Regeneration**

319 – 335 Haydons Road

Existing elevation



Proposed elevation



Our project to fund the regeneration of the historic shopping Parade on Haydons Road was successful and the project is well underway. The restoration of the heritage brickworks on the east side of the road is nearing completion and soon the works to improve the shop fronts and the pavements will start. Our plan is to make the Parade as good a quality as we can get it, hopefully to the same standard as Leop-

old Road. Then we want to plant as many trees as we can.

### **New Toilet Block – Wimbledon Park**

This is open and residents, park users and especially young families love the fabulous spacious, quality design and the wonderful interior. We worked to secure local funds and the smart new spacious cubicles are open, along with a new and much needed toddlers' WC and baby change. All fabulous!



### **Our wonderful new Pocket Park “Gap Road Gardens”**

**As councillors we are so proud to have raised funds from central government to fund and build the new pocket park on the Plough Lane crossroads. This has brightened up a busy junction and our new RHS Wisley grasses and National Trust benches are much enjoyed by local families and visitors. The new daffodils we planted with residents are looking great.**

### **Our next projects for residents...**

**Our next round of projects includes: making sure the All England’s plans for the current golf course protect the green space, double the number of trees and create the brand new Capability Brown public park that we have requested for our community (this will be along the first holes of the golf course); building a new bridge from Ravensbury Terrace so Wimbledon Park residents can walk directly across the Wandle to the Earlsfield shops and train station; linking up the Wandle Trail’s missing link with a brand new footpath under the railway bridge to link up the Wandle Trail to the former Haslemere estate.**

**In Wimbledon Park, working with the Lawn Tennis Association and the All England to improve the top two levels of tennis courts; and improving the small gardens at Kenilworth Green (Strathearn Gardens) to a fresh bright standard.**

**We are also working to make sure that our successful blocking of the £750 residents parking permit fees remains in place and trying to prevent the GLA’s expansion of the ULEZ into Wimbledon (with the cost of living and extremely high council tax in Wimbledon, we simply don’t need these huge additional charges); we also want to make sure our litter bins are kept empty and our streets free of litter and fly-tipping, plus we want to plant as many trees along Durnsford Road and Plough Lane as possible!**

**Wishing you and your families a very Happy Easter.**

**Cllr Ed Gretton   Cllr Oonagh Moulton   Cllr Janice Howard**

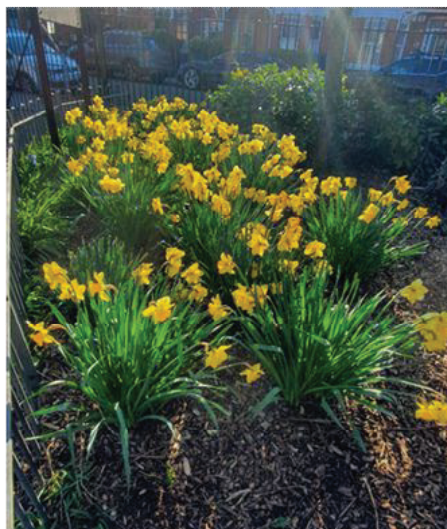


## DURNSFORD RECREATION GROUND

Finally, the new trees have arrived! Three Swamp Cypress surrounded by Service Berry shrubs were planted in early February. The Swamp Cypress is a deciduous conifer which can grow to over 20m and is well suited to the Rec as they can withstand wet winters and dry summers. They have light green leaves in spring turning to red-brown in autumn. The Service Berry produced white flowers in spring and red/purple fruits in autumn, which are popular with birds, but they can also be used to make jams and jellies.



Two Rowan trees were also planted at the far end of the Rec by the wood, again the berries are popular with birds in the autumn.



There has been a wonderful display of daffodils at the entrance to the Rec from Wellington Road.

And the flower bed by the entrance from Lucien Road has been full of daffodils and hyacinths, with the tulips and other spring bulbs still to come.

Once the spring bulbs have died down these areas will be sown with wildflower seeds.

Would you like to lend a hand looking after the Rec?

The fruit hedge and flower beds are tended by the Friends of Durnsford Rec and not the council. Jobs involve – cutting back the fruit hedge and planting bulbs in autumn, sowing wildflowers in late spring, planting shrubs and general weeding. If you would like to get involved drop me an email at [pam.2015@outlook.com](mailto:pam.2015@outlook.com)



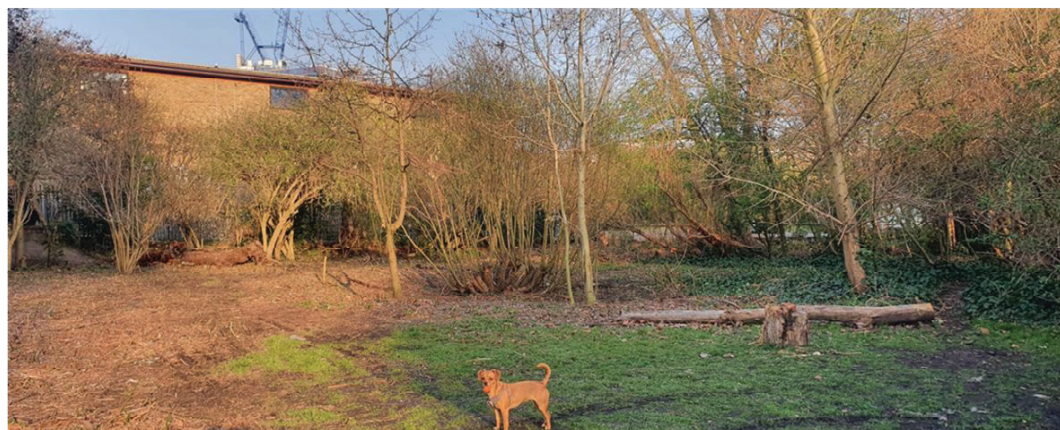


### **Clearing the wood**

Regular users of the Rec will have noticed that the areas at the side and back of the wood have been cut back. These areas were very overgrown with brambles, making the area impassable and choking the trees. A team from idverde have spent a number of days cleaning the site of the brambles and clearing away rubble and other rubbish that has been discarded in the area. They have also fixed the gaps in the fence leading into the Wellington Works making this area safe for children and dogs.

It may look a little barren at the moment but in the next couple of months the blackberry bushes will start to grow back and the oak, goat willow and other trees in the area will be able to thrive.

Should we be able to obtain funds we will look to expanding the wood into these areas by planting more trees in the autumn.



# **Why should I support the Residents' Association?**

There has been a form of Residents' Association in Wimbledon Park since 1906. It provides a forum for discussing important local issues and a platform for action.

Since its inception, the Residents' Association has helped hundreds, probably thousands of local residents, irrespective of religion, race or creed who have turned to the committee for guidance and support.

We regularly check local planning applications and have been very successful in opposing unsuitable developments. We promote planting and improvements in local parks and green areas. We work with the local police to help fight crime in your street and publish the crime statistics in our newsletter.

We led the initiative to redevelop Wimbledon Park Hall in Arthur Road so that once again we have our own community centre and community Café. We have put on fairs and shows in the past and supported numerous local campaigns, individuals and families faced with tragedy.

The Residents' Association has given the Wimbledon Park Community a solid and respected voice when dealing with Merton Council. An individual can achieve only so much, but as a team we can and do achieve so much more.

This area is growing and improving all the time. We are happy to put in time and effort on your behalf. But we cannot function without funds.

We need you to support your local Residents' Association ideally for 3 years, which is only £12. Twelve pounds for a 3 year period will help us pay for printing and stationary to publish this newsletter, computer and IT software to run the website, materials and equipment to keep the flowerboxes blooming in Arthur Road and other improvements.

Please take a moment to fill in the very brief form opposite.

We regret that unless an email address is supplied, we are unable to acknowledge receipt.

If you are already a member but are not sure of your current status, email [wimbledonparkra@gmail.com](mailto:wimbledonparkra@gmail.com) and we will check it for you. Thanks in advance for your support. It is hugely appreciated.

Iain Simpson  
Chairman

## To Join the Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

Please complete this form and return it to us with your payment:

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**Wimbledon Park Residents' Association**

Post to: WPRA, 56, Home Park Road, SW19 7HN

or

drop your subscription through the door of the Chairman, Iain Simpson, at 56 Home Park Road.

**Email\*\*\* If you would like to be included on an e-mail list for crime alerts, WPRA updates and information on other important local issues, please tick here**

☐

**Please date...../...../.....**

## 1993: a good year for covenants

WPRA magazines have discussed the covenants required by Merton when they sold the freehold of the Golf Course to the All England. A very close parallel example (also from 1993) might be of interest. Oxford City Council had planned for a comprehensive housing and business development at Blackbird Leys near Cowley, to include substantial recreation land which could include pitches, cricket green and golf course. The Council acquired various land interests to achieve this, with values apportioned to the specific sites. They completed the purchase of the recreation land and gave a restrictive covenant that it would not be used *“otherwise than for highway or recreational and ancillary purposes”*.

Later, the Council agreed a deal with Oxford United Football Club to lease that “recreation land” for a large sum of money and for OUFC to build a football stadium and ancillary works and car parking, and a couple of days later the Council granted planning consent for all of that. The previous landowner to whom the Council had given the covenant took the Council and OUFC to court, claiming that this construction and/or use of the land for football would breach the covenant. As usual with legal cases there were some extraneous issues, but the heart of the decision is most instructive.

Despite an argument that “recreational purposes” might be very wide, the Court was clear that *“playing it [football] professionally could not be construed as being so [a recreational activity]”*. The Court looked at the purpose for which the covenant was agreed, the context, and concluded that the intention of the parties on entering into it was important: *“the purpose of the restriction was to reflect the limited use to which the area could be put...it would not exclude all development, but it does not include permission for major buildings, even if their function is recreational, as opposed to the erection of buildings ancillary to the recreational use of the land for open-air recreation”*.

Perhaps we should let the judge have the last word on this:

*“The second defendant [OUFC] is proposing to occupy and use the stadium in order to accommodate, inter alia, professional football matches at which spectators will arguably ‘recreate themselves’ by watching. It may be said that such use is therefore in part for the recreational purpose of the spectators. But the covenant is not to use the land otherwise than for a recreational or ancillary purpose. The commercial exploitation of the game of football by hiring players and charging spectators is not itself a recreational purpose. Nor is it merely ancillary to the recreational purpose of the spectators.”*

Christopher Coombe



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***DAVE DAWSON reveals the actual effect of the AELTC's proposals on the diversity of Wimbledon Park.***

**“Greenwashing” – deflecting environmental concerns by applying green labels to thinly-disguised business as usual – is happening in Wimbledon Park.**

**The landscape has great biodiversity; the golf course is a parkland with veteran trees standing in open grassland, a rarity which supports many special species. The lake's plant life makes it one of the best shallow, rich lakes in London. In Spring the area supports 80 bird species, 45 of which depend upon it for breeding. Eighty-four other bird species migrate through or are winter visitors. Eight species of protected bats come to feed on insects emerging from the lake, as does the declining Swift. The Pochard duck is declining nationally, but increasing on the lake.**

**All these species come because the lake and parkland provide their habitat. There are five national Priority Habitats: Woodland, Parkland, Standing Water, Reedbed and Wet Woodland. These mean that the golf course and lake have a perfect Urban Greening Score of 1.**

**The AELTC's proposals will harm the habitats, imposing new grass courts, pathways and amenity grass onto the parkland, removing valuable soils and felling many trees, replacing the valuable reedbed with a new bigger one, thus destroying the existing reedbed and wet woodland and reducing the lake. Polluted sediment will be removed from the middle of the lake only to be dumped around the edges, which will harm water quality. Chemicals from managing grass courts will pollute the lake. AELTC's boast that their proposals will have an Urban Greening Factor of 0.97 is no gain.**

**However, they didn't exchange data with local experts who have studied this landscape for years. So, they missed 45% of the breeding bird species and 32% of the migrants and winter visitors. They found most of the bats, but failed to acknowledge that these protected species come for the insects, which depend in turn on the lake.**

**The proposed new reedbeds are intended to improve water quality by taking up pollutants, but they are far too small and in the wrong place. Pollutants will not be measurably reduced. They didn't see the wet woodland or study the water plants, thus missing its London-wide value. No value was given to the parkland grass, nor to the many mature trees. This inadequate survey is a Nelsonian tactic. If you don't look, you can't see. By finding minimal biodiversity now, they can claim a theoretical gain from the plans, but almost all the species they promise will come as a result of the proposals are already there. So, the Urban Greening Score would be 0.7, a big loss**



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## **WPRA Communications**

**If you want to be kept up to date with the key issues and other useful information on what your WPRA committee members are involved with, why don't you subscribe to our information updates on email? We do not overburden you with emails (we all probably have too many already), and only send out what we think is really useful information.**

**Just send an email to [wimbledonparkra@gmail.com](mailto:wimbledonparkra@gmail.com) and request to be added to the general email list.**

**+++++**

**The Umbrella group of Residents' Associations, which also includes The Wimbledon Society, are campaigning to urge the AELTC to rethink their plans for Wimbledon Park Golf Course.**

**They are on Twitter and Instagram, so, if you want to help support the campaign and are on Twitter or Instagram, please FOLLOW**

**The #hashtag is the same for both.**

**YouCannotBeSeriousSW19**

**@UCantBSeriuSW19**

**There is now an informative dedicated page on The Wimbledon Society website providing information about the AELTC planning application and concerns.**

**<https://wimbledonsociety.org.uk/category/aeltc/>**



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## **The Wimbledon Park Community Trust**

**The Wimbledon Park Community Trust was incorporated in October 2013 and subsequently registered as a charity.**

**The objects of the charity are:**

**‘The promotion of the benefits of the inhabitants of Wimbledon Park and the neighbourhood thereof (hereinafter called the area of benefit) without distinction, by the advancement of education and the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.’**

**The Trust has a lease (99 years from 2013) from The London Borough of Merton, on the space known as Wimbledon Park Hall including the adjoining Arthur’s Café at 170 Arthur Road.**

**The main income of the Trust is derived from renting the hall and café.**

**We would like to encourage local residents to contact us if they feel they can identify a person, organisation or project that would benefit from our support. It can either be a project that would benefit the local area or an organisation that is involved in work that would be of benefit to residents in the local area. We are particularly interested in supporting an apprentice who lives in the local area.**

### **General Guidelines:**

- The total limit of awards will be £10,000 for the current financial year.**
- The maximum grant size that can be applied for is £5,000.**
- The minimum grant size that can be applied for is £500, except in exceptional circumstances.**
- The Trustees will have total discretion on awarding grants.**
- All applications must give proper detail of the intended use of the grant money and what the ultimate benefit/outcome will, or is expected to, be.**
- No grants will be given for general revenue purposes; only for specific or capital spending projects.**



**Applications can be made at any time.**

**Please send them in writing to:**

**Wimbledon Park Community Trust,**

**56 Home Park Road, SW19 7HN.**

**All applications will be acknowledged.**

**The latest available accounts for the charity can be found at**

**[www.wimbledonpark.com](http://www.wimbledonpark.com)**

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