



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

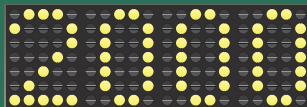
Autumn 2022

AE LTC Proposals for Wimbledon Park Golf Course

FOR



AGAINST



New website

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Summer/Autumn edition 2022

Contents

Chairman's Report	4, 5 & 6
Update from Stephen Hammond MP	7 & 8
New Councillors' Report	10,11,12 & 14
Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP)	15, 16,17 &18
Durnsford Recreation Ground	19,20 & 21
Local Property Developments	22 & 24
School Friends Reunited	25
WPRA — Would you like to get involved?	26 & 27
The Walk and Talk Movement	28 & 30
WPRA Communications	32
Wimbledon Park Community Trust	34 & 35
Committee Members	36
Advertisers' Index	38

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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**Editorial help needed. Contact Iain Simpson on 07836 361782
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Chairman's Report

Well here we are in September 2022, still waiting for a definite date for the Planning meeting to determine the AELTG application submitted in July 2021. (The latest indication is now November.)

However, our umbrella group has not been idle. As you read this report we will be launching a new campaign for 'Save Wimbledon Park'. A new website has been created at www.savewimbledonpark.org and a petition has been launched as well. We want as many people as possible to sign the petition and show Merton Council and the AELTC the strength of opposition to the planning proposals for the golf course. Details of both are on the front cover and also on Page 32.

In the ever-extending interim, public knowledge and appreciation has been increased about the disgraceful plans for replacing the golf course, a highly protected area of Metropolitan Open Land (MOL/equivalent to Green Belt), with an industrial sized tennis complex consisting of, not only a huge new stadium to take 8,000 people, but 38 tennis courts and 9 new assorted large buildings. All that, together with, closest to our area a 30,000 sq ft maintenance building alongside Home Park Road, using the golf course car parks as working compounds. Imagine the tractors criss-crossing the children and pets using the proposed 'permissive' public park. All this will be joined together by a network of roadways, totalling in excess of 9 kilometres.

An estimated 2000 objections have now been submitted using words like disproportionate, excessive, wasteful, unnecessary and greedy. Clearly these objections have fallen on deaf ears as indicated by the 60 additional documents submitted by the AELTC in July, which, on careful examination, contained no substantial changes to the initial plans. There was an attempt to reinforce the idea of public or community benefits by the inclusion of a paper entitled 'Community Benefits'. However, on close reading, there is little, if anything, in the way of clear and unambiguous benefits added to the original proposals. It appears to us that the AELTC are struggling to satisfy the criteria for 'Very Special Circumstances' which are required under National and Local Planning rules for them to demonstrate that they are creating sufficient benefits that would outweigh the 'harm' that they will cause as a result of their plans.

These are helpful key quotes from the NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework):

147. "Inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances."

148. "When considering any planning application, local planning authorities should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations."

201. “Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss.”

Material Consideration

We recently published on our website a significant letter sent from The Wimbledon Society, on our behalf, to the Council setting out why we thought that the existence of the Covenants, established in 1993 on the sale of the Golf Course to the AELTC, were in fact a ‘material consideration’ that should be taken into account when determining the planning application and, in our view, a reason why the planning application should be rejected.

Normally planning departments, when challenged about the existence of Covenants applying to the property in question, would say that they are private, not a ‘planning matter’. However, in a significant number of leading cases, the existence of applicable legislation, policies or Covenants have been held by the courts to be ‘material considerations’ and therefore directly affecting the outcome of the application. I do not intend to repeat the letter here but will quote certain key parts which will refresh your minds on the Covenants in question and also a court decision which we believe is germane to the existing situation.

“The 1993 covenants restrict the use and development of the golf course. This project would be a flagrant breach of them. The covenants were put in place by LBM when they sold the freehold of the golf course to the AELTG (the applicant itself). LBM had committed to the Wimbledon Park Residents’ Association and The Wimbledon Society that the golf course would not be developed. Much more than a private matter, this was a municipal commitment and it and the covenants created public law rights, from which LBM have no power unilaterally to depart. As the commitment served a planning purpose, it and the covenants are Material Considerations in this application, to which any decision must pay regard.”

“The meaning and effect of the 1993 Covenants

“In the transfer from LBM to them of the freehold of the Golf Course dated 23 December 1993, AELTG covenanted with LBM:

“1. Not to use the [Golf Course] other than for leisure or recreational purposes or as an open space.

“2. No building shall be erected on the [Golf Course] other than a building or buildings the use of which is ancillary to the recreational or open space use referred to in para 1 and which building, or buildings shall not impair the appreciation of the general public of the extent or openness of the [Golf Course].

“3. As soon as golf ceases, to dedicate a public walkway around the Lake.

“Restriction of use. The case of *Thames Water v Oxford City Council* (1999) 1 EGLR 167 directly concerned a restrictive covenant limiting use to recreational purposes which a Council wanted to circumvent by building a stadium for professional football. At p170: *“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.”* Substitute tennis for football and the proposal breaches the covenants: the primary justification and use of the applicant’s private tennis complex is commercial for the championships and qualifying, not leisure or recreation, nor would it be open space.

“If the High Court were to be asked the question *“does the proposed development of a professional tennis facility on the golf course land as an adjunct to the existing AELTC facilities across Church Road, extending the international tennis centre, come within the scope of uses permitted within the restriction?”* it is clear, on advice from Leading Counsel, that the Court would answer “no” for the reasons given by the judge in Thames Water. It would amount to a centre for the commercialization of the game of tennis, charging spectators, part of the commercial operation of a massive tournament, so it is not a leisure or recreational use. Nor is it open space: the development of so many courts, buildings, roads, paths and visitor areas would create private enclosed spaces.”

As the campaign gathers pace, we are very pleased to have Stephen Hammond’s support with his clearly stated public objection to the AELTC planning application and more recently his joint statement with Fleur Andersen, the Labour MP for Putney. It is a rare thing these days for MPs from opposite sides of the Commons to agree on a matter of concern to both their constituencies and go to the trouble of making a joint statement. Hopefully this will add to the pressure for the AELTC to rethink their plans. As Stephen says in his report on page 8: “I believe there is a solution, which can be found, which benefits the local community and the All England. However, we are not currently in that position.”

A Change of Councillors in the Ward

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention the recent change of Councillors in our Ward. Politics can be a brutal game and certainly the way Councillors changed as a result of the last elections did seem quite brutal. So we offer our sympathies and our thanks to Oonagh, Janice and Ed who have done a great deal for the residents of the Ward over many years and I am sure will be very disappointed not to be able to continue.

At the same time we welcome our new Councillors, Jil Hall, Samantha Macarthur, and Tony Reiss who have started off with great enthusiasm. We wish them luck.

Iain Simpson

Update from Stephen Hammond MP

AELTC

I am continuing to oppose the All England Lawn Tennis Club's current plans for the development of Wimbledon Park Golf Club.

The proposals as they stand are too large, build on Metropolitan Open Land, and do not allow the public unfettered access to the new public park. I recently published a joint statement with Putney MP, Fleur Anderson – which you can see here: <https://www.stephenhammond.net/news/joint-statement-stephen-hammond-mp-mp-wimbledon-fleur-anderson-mp-mp-putney-aeltc-show-court>

I am continuing to work with local Residents' Associations, including the WPRA, to express the local opposition to these proposals. It now looks as if the planning committee will not hear the application until November. I know many local people have made objections already. Although the deadline for representations passed on the 15th August, you can make your views known by emailing planning.representations@merton.gov.uk quoting the reference number 21/P2900.

Next Page

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I believe there is a solution, which can be found, which benefits the local community and the All England. However, we are not currently in that position and I shall not support the proposals in their current state.

Climate Events

I recently hosted my second local climate change drop-in session in Raynes Park. Many local residents across Wimbledon Park and beyond have contacted me regarding our climate, particularly during the ongoing heat wave, and I share their concerns.

It was great to discuss changes we can make on a local level, including whether or not we can change the law to permit the installation of roof solar panels in conservation areas – which would be a great way to lower bills, and fight climate change. I also think that the wider installation of EV charging points should be a local priority.

In the autumn I will be hosting more events and look forward to joining with local people to discuss their ideas for tackling climate change and improving our environment at a local level.

Crime

I know several people have lost cars off driveways; I have been continuing to speak to our local police about this issue. They have assured me they take this matter incredibly seriously and continue to search for the perpetrators.

I regularly meet with our local Police and I am always happy to raise matters on behalf of constituents – should anyone have particular concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Shop Local

Cost of living pressures are impacting us all currently; many local businesses need our support. I am proud to support our local independent businesses and recently I highlighted Whisk Deli on local Independents' Day; it's great to see the business thriving. I am proud to support local businesses across Wimbledon – any businesses with any questions or concerns about the current situation are welcome to contact my office.

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Report from our new Councillors

First of all, a very big thank you to all local residents who voted for us in May. Whoever you voted for, or even if you didn't vote at all, we are here for you and will listen to your concerns and work hard for our area.

It has now been more than a hundred days since we were elected, and we have had to 'hit the ground running'. The range of personal issues has been wide-ranging from parking and waste collection issues to planning concerns (including worries about the AELTC expansion plans) and worries about air quality.

We have been liaising with local organisations, including of course Wimbledon Park Residents' Association.

Near the top of our agenda has been the AELTC plans to build on Metropolitan Open Land and working with members of the community to best represent their concerns. While most of us support the Wimbledon tennis tournament and are pleased to have a prestigious sporting event in our town, the plans for expansion are on a scale and in a location that raise many issues, including the potential damage to the environment and loss of green spaces. The number of practice courts sought and the huge new stadium, together with the plan to cut down 300 mature trees and install 9km of roads, are of particular concern. The offer of the temporary use of a small part of the site as a permissive park does not mitigate the damage that would be done to this historic green space. We are working with local groups to put forward alternative plans, which we hope AELTC will take on board.

We are looking at ways we can help improve the following:

- Sporting facilities in the area**
- Air quality throughout the ward**
- Reducing fly tipping**
- Cleaning up the streets (helping shops and flats above shops with waste issues)**
- Reducing HGV traffic**
- Green spaces generally, including allotments**
- Keeping new developments to a family-friendly height and scale**
- Road safety measures**
- Reducing street 'clutter'**
- Improving the Wandle Trail (filling in the 'Earlsfield Gap')**
- Greening Haydon's Road with more street trees to enhance the new shop-fronts**

Cost of Living Crisis

Like many of you, we are concerned about the continuing Cost of Living Crisis and are looking at ways in which we can help local residents find the help they need. Here is some information which might help:

Merton Community Hub: The Merton Community Hub was initially set up as a helpline in response to Covid-19 to support people with information and guidance and assist with emergency shopping and prescription collection. Since then, the hub has evolved into a way to connect local people to the range of services across the borough more generally that may be of benefit to them. The Hub provides information, guidance, signposting, and referrals to support residents with a range of issues, including the key areas outlined below. Some examples of help provided to support people with the cost of living are helping people to access foodbanks, grants, and financial advice from local services.

- Need help connecting with local services and community groups?
- Struggling with bills, shopping, or in immediate financial difficulty?
- Feeling lonely and/or isolated?
- Want advice on how to stay active?
- Need support with staying independent at home?
- Worried about your mental health?
- Need information on Covid-19?

The Merton Hub is available to call or email between 10am & 4pm Monday-Friday on 020 8066 4086 or help@mertoncommunityhub.org.uk.

The Hub can also be contacted via its website at

<https://mertoncommunityhub.org.uk/>

Reducing Energy Bills

Local Council Taxpayers can obtain a refund of their council tax to offset increased energy bills. See the information below (from the Merton Council website):

If you live in a property in Council Tax bands A to D, you should have received a £150 Council Tax rebate payment to help with the cost of living. These payments were made between April and July 2022.

Most eligible Council Tax account holders have received the payment into their bank account. If you're eligible for a rebate, please check your bank account to see if you have received it.

Where residents are eligible for this rebate, but we did not have their bank details and they have not made a claim for a payment, we have credited their Council Tax account and issued revised bills to reflect this.

If you think you're eligible but haven't received a payment or a revised Council Tax bill to show the payment has been credited, please contact us by email at CTaxenergyPayment@merton.gov.uk

News Items

- Merton Council has increased charges for sports in Wimbledon Park by 2.5% to take effect on 1st September.
- A new 'super-tunnel' is being built from Wimbledon to Canning Town to provide better power distribution across London.
- Discussions are taking place between Wandsworth and Merton Councils regarding the 'Earlsfield Gap' in the Wandle Trail.
- New CCTV cameras will be installed to deter fly-tipping across the Borough.
- The addition of storeys on top of existing blocks of flats will now be required to obtain planning permission due to the ward being within 3km of the St George's Hospital helipad. (Previously they were allowed under Permitted development).
- We will be pressing Greenspaces to agree that the paddling pool will be tested in advance of next summer to ensure it is ready to be opened on schedule.
- We have had to make representations to Thames Water about their woeful response to stopping a major leak on Durnsford Road (opposite the mosque). It is unacceptable that water is allowed to be wasted at a time of water shortages.
- We were able to get fly tipping shifted from behind a business in Arthur Road and are taking steps to ensure that future tipping can be prevented.
- We managed to get the grass at Gap Road Cemetery cut back and a new maintenance schedule agreed.
- There is now an agreement to install more electric vehicle charging points in the ward.
- The lift at Wimbledon Park Station is available whenever the station is open



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or

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– we are asking TfL to post a sign letting lift users know how to access it when staff are not present.

- We pressed the Council to adopt a Menopause Awareness Pledge.
- We proposed that Merton Council become an accredited Living Wage Employer.

Police Matters

We have been liaising with local police about crime in the area. Luckily Wimbledon Park is not a high crime area. However, thefts from motor vehicles (especially catalytic converters) and thefts of vehicles remain higher than we would like. Catalytic converters can be marked with the car and owner's identity to make it harder to sell on the black market. Also, cages can be bought to secure them to the chassis.

Another area of concern is financial frauds and digital scams. Here is a link to help you avoid becoming a victim:

Videos and electronic leaflets can be found on the following link:

www.met.police.uk/littlemedia. Free cyber advice can be found <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/cyberaware/home>. Always report scams fraud and cyber-crime to Action Fraud, either online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by telephone on 0300 123 2040.

Finally, we welcome residents getting in touch with us to raise concerns or suggest ways in which we can improve the ward. We cannot always get the outcome you want but pledge to work hard for you and for Wimbledon Park Ward. Please also contact us if you have questions you would like us to answer. We will do our best to help.

We hold a surgery on the first Saturday of every month in Wimbledon Park (by the café – or inside if bad weather), from 10am to 11am. Come and say hello!

Jil Hall jil.hall@merton.gov.uk

Samantha MacArthur samantha.macarthur@merton.gov.uk

Tony Reiss tony.reiss@merton.gov.uk

Messages can be left for us on our office phone line: 020 8545 4770.

FOWP article for Summer issue of WPRA 2022

Summer greetings to you all! The rain, (at last!), is pouring down as I write this, my final article for FOWP. I'm moving on and making way for another colleague to take over so here goes.....

Dam Safety Works

A lot has happened since the spring and, as you will have noticed, there has indeed been a lot of building work going on in the park over the past few months! The Dam Safety Works team continued digging up the Wimbledon Park Brook and the Crazy Golf had to be closed. Given the new stream's steep banks and harsh



landscaping, we asked the Dam Safety team about making it safer and more attractive, but any plans for this seem to be on hold for now. The team also built a raised, large horseshoe shaped bund or embankment (made from soil dug up by the digging of the brook) in front of the Revelstoke Road entrance to prevent flooding into the Grid. We queried why a gap had appeared in the bund; it is to 'provide vehicle access to the park for future events' and, apparently, to assist people with mobility issues. In the event of an actual flood, sandbags would, apparently, be used to stem the flow of water. We were also concerned about the gradient of the ramp built on the perimeter path as some people were having difficulties walking over it. It was causing

problems for pram users too. Some success here! The southern side of the ramp was given a gentler gradient but the northern part remains steeper! It has, at least been tarmacked which makes it easier to walk over. [The park was 'spruced up' in parts just before the All England Championships. We had some new bins installed and the lakeside walk \(with young trees having been planted there\) was opened.](#)

Lakeside benches

The lakeside benches at the Athletics Stadium end of the dam walkway have not been put back. We were seeking to get these benches reinstalled as they were very well used and much appreciated by all park visitors. However, should there ever be a flood, benches positioned near the Athletics Stadium would be hazardous as they would collect debris and create turbulence. All the benches that were surrounding the lake before the Dam Safety Works are now back on the walkway but bunched up and closer together than before. It's good to see them back as many are memorial benches and they are all being much used and enjoyed by park visitors – as always!

Table Tennis

It was lovely to see so many players taking part in a table tennis event. Both experienced and novice players got a chance to play and were given guidance and tips by Louis Cadier, the organiser; good to see our table put to such good use. We hope more people will take up table tennis and, don't forget, we have another table ready for the near future! For more info see: www.streettt.com/about

Revelstoke Road entrance project

Unfortunately, despite approval for our planning applications by both Wandsworth and Merton Councils, we have not got any further. This is because of the lack of co-operation we have received from TfL re the altering of the fencing even though they agree that 'the entrance could be more welcoming'. We plod on!

Merton's Local Plan

Merton Council has put together a new Local Plan. We, like many other local residents and organisations, have been involved in making representations to the independent inspectors re Wi3 which appertains to Wimbledon Park. The inspectors are examining the plan and this process will not be completed until later in the year, possibly October 2022.

Emergency Tree Watering

Many thanks to everyone - members of the FOWP, volunteers, idverde staff and the Community Payback Team who helped with the emergency tree watering during the summer dry spell. We managed emergency watering sessions during August and the plan is to continue on each Wednesday morning 10.00 (meet at the tennis kiosk) - 11.30 am until the end of August when we would re-evaluate. Well done to everyone who took part - a fantastic job, much needed and appreciated.

Might you be interested in joining us as a gardening volunteer- not just watering but planting trees, tending plants et al? More volunteers would be very welcome. If so, please contact us at www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org.uk



Fifth response to AELTC Planning Application

We have been busy again! We have put together, and submitted, a fifth response to the AELTC plans. This was in response to new documents published by AELTC in June 2022. You can read our response here.

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

The new bund

A big thankyou to the dedicated idverde team – Simon, Tom, James, Ricardo, and everyone involved in planting and tending the meadow flowers on the new bund. It really looked delightful.



Price increases

We received an email from idverde asking us to pass this news on.

‘Just letting you know that from 1st September 2022 all prices for sports in the park will increase by 2.5%. This is a London Borough of Merton (LBM) decision that applies to all sports played in the borough.’ Posters alerting people to the price increases have, we understand, been put up around the courts.

Sorry it's not better news!

Interactive water play area (also known as the Splash Pool!)

The interactive water play area was due to open on 13 June but something went wrong and it did not open until 24 June. It's wonderful to see the joy this activity engenders! It has been much valued during our hot, dry summer despite a few maintenance hiccups! It was due to close on 4 September but we asked Andrew Kauffman, Head of Merton Parks, if the opening period could be extended. He agreed to extend it for another fortnight in September. This will allow pre-schoolers more time to play once the older children have returned to school, weather permitting of course.



I hope you have all had an enjoyable summer and enjoy these few photos in memory of summer in the park 2022.

And, finally, it's a fond farewell from me. Please do continue to follow us for all our latest news on our website, Twitter and Facebook.

With very best wishes to you all.

Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty

DURNSFORD ROAD RECREATION GROUND

In August around 30 people from the Wimbledon Park Walk and Talk Movement visited the Rec hoping to see and pick some fruit. Unfortunately, due to the long dry summer, there was very little fruit to be seen, although the fruit trees and shrubs had flowered well in the spring. Due to the lack of rain, they all started to drop their fruit very early. Even some of the trees have started to lose their leaves in August and the Mulberry tree that was moved when the school was extended has unfortunately died and the wildflower beds, which had looked good for a few months, had all finished by mid-July.



Wildflower meadow sown by the Council

I thought I would do a bit of research into the history behind the Rec and thanks to a book by Bernard Rondeau - *Wimbledon Park – From Private Park to Residential Suburb*, I was able to find out quite a few interesting facts which I shared with the Walk and Talk Movement, and I thought I would now share them with you.

The Rec and Wimbledon Park School were part of the Wimbledon Park Estate owned by the Spencer family, which stretched from Tibbet's Corner to Wimbledon Village and Wimbledon Common down to the Rec, which would have been farming land at that time.

In 1846 the WP estate was sold to John Beaumont, Managing Director of County Fire Office later to amalgamate with Sun Alliance. His daughter Augusta later Lady Lane inherited the estate but her only interest appears to have been financial as she lived in Suffolk and proceeded to sell off parts of the wider estate.

The area that is now Brooklands Avenue, Lucien Road and Dawlish Avenue and known as Pollard's Field was sold to the Wise brothers in 1898 and became a sports

ground for Morgan Crucible Company until 1920 and then it was a sports ground for the Van den Berghs company until 1934. During the winter months this area was usually flooded and was used for ice-skating; something the residents of Brooklands Avenue and Lucien Road are well aware of, as the area still floods to-day!

In 1907 Lady Lane sold what are now the Rec and the school to the council. The school opened in 1908 using a redundant school from Woking, which consisted of external sides and roof made of corrugated iron; it therefore became known as the 'Tin School'. The classrooms were heated by slow combustion coke stoves and in winter temperatures as low as 1°C were not unusual! It was only meant to be temporary but remained for some 20 years. The new school was opened in 1927.

In the Rec, sports were played with Wimbledon Park Rangers Football club formed in 1907 who played friendly matches against Southern Railway employees and Wimbledon Borough employees. There was also lawn tennis and a bowling club, which moved from The Crescent in 1914.

During WWII there were underground public air raid shelters in the Rec and bombs fell on the Rec on 12 Sept and 4 Oct in 1940 and again on 17 Feb 1941. I am not aware of any casualties.

If you would like to get hold of a copy of Bernard's book it is still on sale at the Wimbledon Society Museum price £10. It is certainly worth a read if you are interested in the history of Wimbledon Park. It contains lots of lovely old photos and maps and information on nearly every street in the Ward, together with information about Wimbledon Park station and the Park.



Wildflowers which had self-seeded from last year in the spring bulb bed

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In February 3 Swamp Cypress trees, surrounded by Serviceberry shrubs were planted with monies obtained from the Neighbourhood Fund. Unfortunately these have not fared well and appeared to have died off. However, in the last month, new shoots have started to appear, so fingers crossed they will make it through the winter and put on new growth next year.

I applied to the AELTC Green Canopy Project in partnership with the Mayors of Merton and Wandsworth and have been lucky enough to secure one of their propagated oaks, which will be planted in the Rec in the Autumn.

The flowerbed in the Rec was planted by the Residents' Association in 2002 to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee and the fruit hedge in 2012 for her Diamond Jubilee. To follow on this tradition and commemorate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, we will be planting a tree in the Rec in the autumn.

Pamela Healy

PROPERTY DEVELOPMENTS

Goldcrest site – Wellington Works

This site, which is situated at the far end of the Wellington Road Industrial Estate and to the side of woods in the Durnsford Road Recreation Ground, has seen numerous planning applications over the last few years. All applications were rejected by Merton's Planning Department, primarily on the grounds of access to the site. Which would either be through the Industrial Estate, which would not be a safe and secure environment for pedestrians, or via a very narrow lane, owned by Goldcrest, that leads to the site from Dawlish Avenue. This too was thought to be unsafe as there is insufficient room to allow two vehicles to pass or, for that matter, a pedestrian and a vehicle. Goldcrest have appealed to the Planning Inspector twice, the last being in May this year. The hearing was attended by residents of Dawlish Avenue, the Residents' Association and our local councillors. At the meeting, which lasted all day, the Inspector invited comments from us, and I am pleased to say, that he listened to the points raised by us and Merton's Planning Department and rejected Goldcrest's appeal on the grounds that access to the site, via the lane from Dawlish Avenue, would not provide a safe and secure environment for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles. The site has now been rented out to a white van company who are using the narrow lane as an access route into Dawlish Avenue, which is causing great concern among local residents.

Rufus Business Centre

Planning consent has been given to Wandle Way Ltd to develop the Rufus Business Centre, which is situated at the far end of the new road – Earlsfield Place (formerly Haslemere Industrial Estate), and behind the wood in the Durnsford Road Recreation Ground. The development will consist of 96 units over 3-8 storeys, with the highest storey being adjacent to the railway embankment, commercial floorspace of 880sqm on the ground floor together with associated landscaping. There will be no direct access to the Durnsford Rec from this site, although it is proposed that there is a locked gate in the development that could be used in the future.

Together with local residents, we fought hard to have the height of this development reduced to 6 storeys in keeping with the Earlsfield Place development. However, the New London Plan states that development sites must be maximised to provide the greatest number of units in acceptable areas. It was also proposed that access should be allowed through the Rufus development to the Goldcrest site in the Wellington Works, thus making access to this site safer for residents in Dawlish Avenue, however the developer did not consider this option viable.

Earlsfield Place

This site consisting of 129 dwellings together with 1,176 sqm of commercial floor-space has been completed and new residents are living in the flats. However,

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Earlsriver, the same developers, (just a different name) as the Rufus site, have been unable to rent the commercial space. In 2021 they were granted permission to convert the ground floor office space in Block 1 into 12 residential units. They have now applied to convert the commercial Unit 3 (2 storey building at the entrance to Earlsfield Place) into 5 flats. This begs the question, if they were unable to rent out this commercial space in Earlsfield Place why is there 880sqm of commercial space in the new Rufus development?!

Lastly, part of the planning requirements was to provide a pocket park and associated landscaping. This so far has turned out to be a small area covered in artificial grass, which has not even been properly fixed and a couple of benches, a few lumps of wood, 2 trees one of which is dead and no shrubbery! Our councillors are pursuing this issue with the Planning Enforcement Officer.



The Pocket Park, with its wrinkled artificial grass

Glass House – Arthur Road

A further application has been submitted for an extra floor to provide a 1-bedroom flat. Previous applications have been successfully rejected following representation by the Residents' Association and local residents. The WPRA have made further representations and we hope that these too will be successful.

Footbridge across the Wandle

Now that work on Wimbledon Park Lake has been completed, we will be raising again the proposed new footbridge across the Wandle between Ravensbury Terrace and Groton Road, with the Council. This bridge has the approval of Merton and Wandsworth Councils. However, resources had not been available due to work on the lake. There are a number of agencies involved in this scheme, including Network Rail and the Environment Agency and the linking of the footbridge to the extension of the Wandle Trail to fill in the area known as the Earlsfield Gap.

Pamela Healy

SCHOOL FRIENDS REUNITED

In April this year a car pulled up outside our house in Wellington Road. In the car were three people we had never met before: Daphne Percario, her daughter Corinna, and her cousin Adrian. Daphne Hall (as she then was) had lived in our house as a young girl during most of the second World War and for a few years after. She was overjoyed to be invited in to see the house as it was now. She had lived there with her aunt, Minnie Grace Hall, which was a name I recognised from old documents we had with the original title deeds. We showed Daphne her aunt's signature from when she bought the house in 1945 - although she had rented the house for many years before then.



After they left it occurred to us that she might remember Anita Oulds, who lived a few doors down, and had done since she was very young. It turned out they had been best friends, went to Wimbledon Park Primary School and then Queens Road School together, but had lost touch soon after.



Daphne

Anita

So, we invited Daphne and Corinna back to our house to meet Anita, to swap memories of gas masks and nights in the air raid shelter under Durnsford Road Recreation Ground. Daphne also told us about her much-travelled life married to Italian chef Renato Percario, who had worked for (among others) Princess Margaret, King Constantine of Greece, Ivana Trump and the Rothschild family.



Friends reunited



Looking over old photos

As told by Chris Lawrence

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET INVOLVED?

More committee members wanted!

Do you love living in Wimbledon Park?

Do you care about what is happening in your area?

Would you like to be more involved?

The Wimbledon Park Residents' Association represents everyone living in the Ward. We meet 10 times a year to discuss issues affecting our everyday lives, such as planning applications, road safety, air pollution, and inputting to the wider issues such as the South London Waste Plan and the New Local Plan, and of course working with other RAs and The Wimbledon Society to defeat the AELTC planning application to develop Wimbledon Park golf course. We make representations to the Council on these and other issues on your behalf.

We are also friends of Durnsford Road Recreation Ground where we maintain the flower beds and fruit hedge and plant spring bulbs and shrubs. We obtained the grant to have exercise equipment installed together with 2 more benches and trees.

We plant and maintain the flower boxes on Arthur Road and are now assisting with the watering and maintenance of the Bee Friendly Flower bed on Wimbledon Park Tube Station.

Issues we are pursuing at the moment include: - safety on the Durnsford Road Railway Bridge, the new footbridge across the Wandle and the introduction of more trees on our streets.

The Ward Councillors attend our meetings where we ask them to raise issues directly with the Council on our behalf.

Currently we are a small committee and need much more help. Just a few hours a month would be enormously helpful. In particular we are looking for:

a Minutes Secretary and a Membership Secretary.

If you would like meet for a coffee and a chat, please get in touch with

either

Pamela Healy at pam.2015@outlook.com or

Iain Simpson at wimbledonparkra@gmail.com

[We look forward to hearing from you](#)

To Join the Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

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

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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...../...../.....

Let's Walk and Talk Together in Wimbledon Park

Andy Yates, Co-Founder of The Walk and Talk Movement, explains how walking and talking is making a real difference to the Wimbledon Park community and how you can have some fun and get involved.

"You have completely changed my life..." one of our walkers and talkers whispered to us a few weeks ago.

It could all have been a different story. Almost 12 months ago we stood alone, standing out in (very) bright green t-shirts in the middle of Wimbledon Park seeing if anybody would arrive for our first Walk and Talk. If nobody turned up, we might have had a quiet cup of tea and written things off to experience.

But people did come. Local residents, neighbours, friends - old and new, young and old, buggies and beagles....and they keep coming...to our free, fun Walk and Talks for the whole community starting at 10.30am every Saturday from near the park cafe.

It all started in the unlikely setting of a Sunday lunch with Ali Palmer - a Wimbledon Park Primary School mum I have known for decades. Ali has done some amazing local charity work and I wanted to do something that could help reconnect people after lockdowns and isolation. The idea boiled down to something very simple - a free and fun community walk and talk every Saturday at 10.30am in your local green space; for anybody, any background, any age, any pets; a chance for people to take a stroll, meet new people, chat and connect. The premise was health and happiness can be a walk in the park...

The next day we began to realise what we had let ourselves in for. Even the simple ideas are deceptively difficult to pull off, especially if you are trying to reach out to many parts of the local community that have suffered the most.

So, we frantically started contacting local councillors and MPs, community groups, residents' associations, friends of the park and green spaces, GPs and medical centres, libraries, churches - or in other words anybody we could think of to spread the word, crossed our fingers and toes and hoped people would turn up.

Thankfully, after our successful Wimbledon Park launch, people kept coming and numbers grew. In fact, since last Autumn, we have built up a 1,000+ strong local community, walked more than 2,000 miles, made more than 3 million steps together, burnt more than 200,000 calories and enjoyed thousands of conversations and stories. In the last few months, during and after our Walk and Talks, we have also linked up with local community groups and done everything from tree plant-



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ing, crown green bowling, met a Womble, visited Wimbledon tennis, had the jubilee bagpipes played for us, meditated at the Thai Temple, had nature talks from local experts and much much more...

We have also received very valued support from the Wimbledon Park Community Trust, Merton Council and Merton Giving to grow our Wimbledon Park Walk and Talk and to roll out our walk and talks across Merton so that everybody in the borough can get to a walk and talk easily. We now run four popular and growing Walk and Talks every Saturday at 10.30am from the picnic area near the Snuff Mill in Morden Hall Park, Canons House and Grounds in Mitcham and Wandle Valley walks starting at Colliers Wood tube station:

<https://www.walkandtalkmovement.org/locations>.

I am regularly asked what makes our Walk and Talks so successful. The answer is simple. Everyone receives a warm welcome; we are inclusive and accessible. No registrations or bookings are required - walkers and talkers know they can turn up and we will be there at the time and the same place every week. Most importantly we put smiles on faces every week.

So come along and join our friendly bunch any Saturday at 10.30am from the big Walk and Talk poster near Wimbledon Park Café and feel free to invite friends and neighbours. Any age, ability, pets and buggies are very welcome.

...and we are now also looking for some lovely local volunteers who can help support our walks and have a lot of fun doing it. We make volunteering easy and provide lots of support. Help can be from as little as a few hours a month. We would love to hear from you.

Come and see us any Saturday or e-mail me at info@thewalkandtalkmovement.org and we would be delighted to tell you more over a nice Walk and Talk and a cup of tea.

Let's Walk and Talk Together in Wimbledon Park.

Andy Yates

Co-Founder

The Walk and Talk Movement

Helping your local community every step of the way

E-mail me: info@thewalkandtalkmovement.org

To find out more about our walk and talks visit: <https://wewalkandtalk.org/>



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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? It's free and 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 and request to be added to the general email list.

+++++

The Umbrella group of Residents' Associations, which also includes The Wimbledon Society, continue their campaign to urge the AELTC to rethink their plans for Wimbledon Park Golf Course. A new campaign has been launched.

See the new website at www.SaveWimbledonPark.org and please help us by signing the petition at www.Change.Org/SaveWimbledonpark

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 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

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Iain Simpson - Chairman & Newsletter Editor	Home Park Road
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Index of Advertisers

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Engineering	Naismith Engineering	23
Locksmiths	Oakley Locksmiths Ltd	35
Landscape Gardening and Building	K D Raynsford	33
Schools	Little Learners	31
Plumbing	Adam's Plumbing	37
Restaurants	Chick'n'Chaii	40
School	Hall School, Wimbledon	31
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