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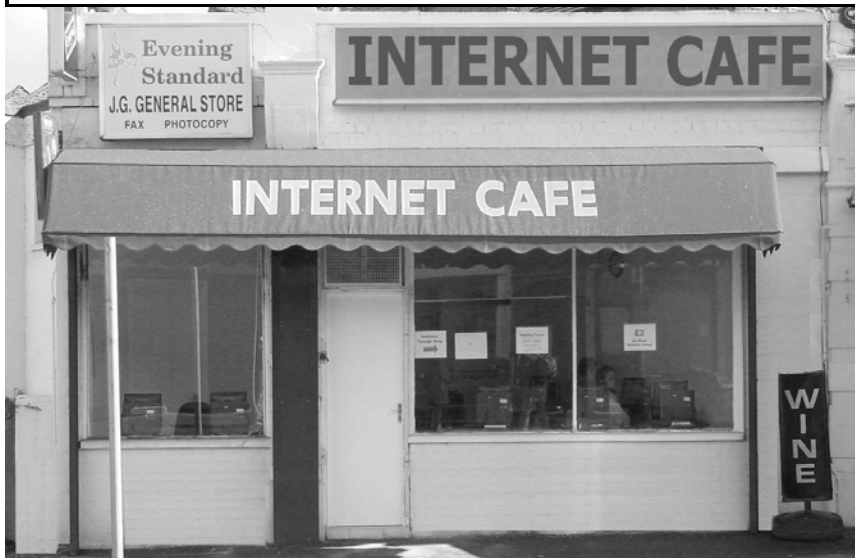
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Chairman's report

The Ravindran Family Appeal - The community response has exceeded all expectations.

As many of you will already be aware the community response to the appeal, following the fire at Partletons newsagents, has been simply tremendous. The overall funds donated now amount to close to £21000. Not all of this has been collected in the WPRA fund. Some money has been given directly. The total amount credited to the WPRA fund so far is over £16000 and we are aware of more to come. So a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed so far.

We are continuing with the appeal and have almost concluded discussions with the Thames Community Foundation, a well established charity, who have very kindly offered to provide us with a facility whereby we can take advantage of the tax benefits associated with 'Gift Aid'. This will enable further donations to be tax efficient for the donors and increase the value of the donations to the fund. Details of this arrangement will be available on the website in due course.

Particular thanks are due to Paresh Modasia and his tremendous staff, Anne and Abdul, at the Pharmacy and to Bharat at Jeyes News who have all done and continue to do a wonderful job in coordinating the collection of funds and assisting in other valuable ways.

I can report that the family are doing as well as can be expected in the circumstances and that they are shortly going to be moving into their own accommodation nearby. Until now they have been staying with relatives in Banstead and it has been difficult for them to deal with the travelling every day to deliver their daughter to Wimbledon Park School. Moving into their own house, will be another major

step in bringing some normality to their lives.

As some of you will be aware, at the request of a number of residents, the Vicar of St Lukes, Simon Vibert, very kindly held a service of remembrance in July, following the fire. This was greatly appreciated by both the Ravindran family, who bravely attended, and the local community.

Thank you again to everyone.

Wimbledon Park Hall

By the time you read this the first of our public meetings to discuss the development proposals for the Hall will have taken place. I hope, if you couldn't get to that one, you can attend the one coinciding with our AGM on the 25th October.

This proposed development, being a combination of Community Resource Centre and high quality accommodation does, I believe, have the potential to give a significant boost to Wimbledon Park and help it to become a more vibrant and sustainable community.

On pages 21-24 we have included pictures of the model of the building and some other images provided by the architect. This will give you a good idea of what is proposed. Similar details are available on the new website at www.wimbledonpark.com. The plans and model can be viewed at the offices of the Home Office, estate agents, in Arthur Road.

New Website

I hope you have had a chance to look at our new website. The committee is highly delighted with what Clive France of Internetics has produced. We are extraordinarily lucky that Clive took pity on us and wanted to help us upgrade our rather static and uninteresting website. We did agree that it wasn't going anywhere, since no-one had the skill or time to take it on. Those of you who are familiar with websites will understand how much work and long hours are involved in putting it all

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**Informal Consultation
Controlled Parking Zones Review
P1, P2, P2s - Wimbledon Park**



The Council will be reviewing the operation of parking facilities in the Wimbledon Park area. Consultation documents will be sent out in the 1st week of October and resident have an opportunity to add their comments.

The closing date for the consultation is **20th October 2006**.

Public exhibitions will be held where detailed plans of proposals will be available for inspections.

Officers will be in attendance to address any queries about the proposals.

Venue: - Christ The King RC Church, 9 Crescent Gardens, Wimbledon Park SW19 8AJ

Dates & Times: Wed 11th October 1.30pm - 7.00pm

Thurs 12th October 11.00am - 7.00pm

Sat 14th October 12.30pm - 5.30pm

If you have not received documents before the 5th October 2006, you can download them from Merton's website www.merton.gov.uk/cpz. Alternatively you can contact Clarke Cover on 020 8545 4869 or via email clarke.cover@merton.gov.uk.

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A Private Members Bill for Wimbledon Park

Earlier this year, your local councillors and I along with WPRA, organised local opposition to a proposal to site a mast on top of Beaumont House. On March 20th I together with Cllr Mitchell met representatives of Orange plc. We explained the vast local opposition to the site due to its proximity to residential accommodation, local schooling and health concerns. I suggested that we put forward a list of several less controversial potential sites. This I did in a letter to Orange dated 29th March and for their part Orange committed to look at the alternatives and not to build on Beaumont House.

Then silence. Easter comes and goes; the summer term comes and goes. This week at the end of August I return from my holidays to find a hundred emails from local residents copying me in on a new application and an email from Cllr Moulton to both the local planning department and Orange. It would appear that Orange have decided that none of the alternatives I proposed is suitable. And they are now proposing to put a mast on top of 169 Arthur Rd. Whilst this technically is not on top of Beaumont House; it raises all the same objections. I look forward to a sustained campaign of local opposition.

There are always a huge number of planning applications in our area. Some are the major knockdown of properties and rebuild into new accommodation, some are loft or kitchen extensions and some more minor still. Most people would agree that within reasonable conditions and without detriment to their neighbours, property owners should be able to alter their properties. However I have noticed an increased number of applications that are rejected either by the planners or the committee, that return with very minor alterations time after time. Indeed I know of one application in Wimbledon that has been running for over five years as the owners continually submit application after application to try and get the design they require. The objectors have not only a sense of persecution but have also developed an entrenched myopic stance and oppose even reasonable alterations. And in Wimbledon Park over the summer there have been several applications presented to the Planning Committee for the second time this year. Your home is indeed your castle and whilst you have the right to alter it you must also have the responsibility to accept the decisions made in the perceived best interest of the area as a whole.

These two cases bring me onto my Private Member's Bill. In the first example, the depressing thing is that whilst there is a code of conduct governing local consultation, many local residents do not feel that their objections are listened to. And in reality the prior approval process can restrict the grounds on which objections are allowed to be considered. Indeed the planning process as designated by the "great" Prescott actually presumes in favour of masts. If there were the requirement that all mast application be subjected to the full planning process, there would be greater confidence in the system. In the second example I acknowledge that alterations and rebuilds are a right and, in many cases, a necessity. However what is not correct is that home owners should be able to bombard their neighbours, local councillors and the local planning department with one application after another. This inevitably develops a siege mentality.

Therefore if I get the chance to introduce a Private Members Bill, it will be called Planning Application Limitations Bill. It will have the virtue of being short, having only two clauses.

The Planning Alterations Bill 2007

Clause 1

All applications to build, repair or alter new or existing phone masts in new or existing sites will be subject to the same application process as all other planning applications.

Sub clause (a) the process shall give particular consideration to potentially harmful local factors such as siting near schools; and shall be allowed to consider medical objections

Clause 2

No applicant shall submit more than three applications for a designated property, be it residential, commercial or retail, within any given two year period.

This Bill would I hope attract huge local support here in Wimbledon Park and also across the whole constituency.

Stephen Hammond M.P.



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Fire Safety in the home

The Fire at Partletons is a sharp reminder of how devastating a fire can be. Events such as these do not, mercifully, occur very often and in such a vividly public arena. So it is quite a shock when it does occur and perhaps is a little reminder to us all not to become complacent about our attention to such dangers.

I recently found some very useful information on fire safety in the home supplied by the government. If you have access to the internet, I have listed below the addresses to go to where the information can be downloaded. If you don't have access to the internet perhaps you can ask a friend to do it for you.

This information will also be available on our website, www.wimbledonpark.com.

Excerpt from website www.firekills.gov.uk - **Smoke Alarms.**

'Check batteries once a week. Remember - push the button, not your luck!

Starting on 28 August, the Smoke Alarm Maintenance campaign will remind people - through TV, radio and press advertising - of the need to check their smoke alarms regularly. Fitting a smoke alarm is the simplest step you can take to reduce the risk of fire.

Around 85% of homes now have a smoke alarm, but there's no point in having one if it doesn't work. In 2004, fire-fighters in the UK attended over 7,000 accidental house fires where alarms were fitted but failed to work.'

<http://www.firekills.gov.uk/handbook/pdf/handbook-english.pdf>

<http://www.firekills.gov.uk/leaflets/pdf/english/firesafetyinthehome.pdf>

<http://www.firekills.gov.uk/leaflets/pdf/english/workingsmokealarmssavelives.pdf>

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Flower Power in Arthur Road

I don't think there is any question that the flower boxes in Arthur Road have been a resounding success. Since their installation in June last year they have added a wonderfully bright and cheerful element to the street scene.

The original planting of the boxes was financed by the WPRA, some contributions from local shops and set up by two committee members, Michael Moore and Cecile Bridgens. The key to the success of any project like this is the ongoing commitment to maintenance. That is where we must say a big thank you to both Michael Moore and Cecile Bridgens but particularly to Michael who has done a magnificent job of maintaining them on an almost daily basis. I am sure many of you will have seen him there in the mornings tending to the plants. Without this care and attention the display would never look as good as it does.

The planting this year has been a great success with the eye catching vivid colours offered by a mix of Marigolds, Geraniums, Nasturtiums and Felicias. We did suffer a bit of vandalism earlier in the year when a couple of boxes were ripped off the railings and contents scattered. But that has been the only incident.

I was reminded recently, that it was about 12 years ago, that Cecile and David Lofthouse from the Council organised the planting of Canadian Amelanchiers along the street. They have certainly made a big difference.

We are extremely fortunate to have such enthusiastic and community minded people like Michael and Cecile who help to make Wimbledon Park just that little bit more special for all of us.

(If you have area near you that could benefit from some flower boxes, the WPRA is willing to cover the cost of establishing them, provided someone locally will maintain them)



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Christmas Newsletter.

The closing date for articles and adverts for the next issue will be in early November. This allows sufficient time for the production and printing.

Advertisements and articles for publication should be with us by 4th /5th November

Thanks

Your production team.
wimbledon.park@virgin.net

Neighbourhood Watch Newsletter - September 2006

Children at Risk

On the 7th September 2006 at approx 8am, a young female was pulled into a white box van on Lake Road, SW19 and sexually assaulted. There were two male occupants, one of whom was described as. White male, aged 30-35, medium build, blonde spiky hair, wearing a yellow jumper.

The student is extremely distressed but safe and the police and relevant agencies are supporting her and her family. I would urge you all to speak to your children about keeping themselves safe on the way to and from school and the need for vigilance. Should any student see anything out of the ordinary or feel anxious they should report it to a member of staff immediately. Thankfully events such as these are extremely rare, but the Police will be providing additional patrols in the area for the next couple of weeks to support and reassure the local community.

Mentors wanted for Safer Neighbourhood Team Sergeants in London

Safer London Foundation urgently requires local business managers in London to Mentor Safer Neighbourhood Team Police Sergeants. Share your business and leadership skills and make an impact at a local level. Training will be provided. Time commitment: Approximately 3 hours per month, plus 1 day training.

For more information, contact Julie Williams-Krishnan, Volunteers Co-ordinator at: 020 7021 0301 e-mail: juliewilliams@saferlondonfoundation.org website: www.saferlondonfoundation.org

O2 launches new community fund O2 has launched a new community fund to enable people to make real improvements to where they live. Awards of up to £1,000 will be available to support local environmental, urban renewal and conservation projects. For more information and to download an application form please visit www.o2.com/cr/community_fund.asp. Please be sure to read the entry criteria.

Burglaries

There has been an increase in burglaries on the borough with the worst hit areas being Longthornton and Figges Marsh Wards. There have been 15 burglaries on these wards in the last two weeks, predominantly in the area between Streatham Road and Rowan Road. Six – eight of these burglaries have been linked. With some of them, the suspect has targeted properties that have had a porch door open and he has then entered the porch door and forced the locked inner door open.

Most burglaries have occurred on the weekdays between 0800 and 1900 hours. The property taken is usually items that are easily transportable, such as jewellery, mobile phones, laptops and digital cameras. There will be extra police patrols in the area and co-ordinators are urged to report any suspicious behavior to the police on 999. If you are worried about your home security please contact the Crime Prevention Officers on 020 8649 3249, who will carry out a free survey. If you are over 60 you could qualify for upto £200 worth of security equipment free of charge. No catch!

Lee Roberts

Crime Figures

April 2006 to August 2006	Burglary	Vehicle	Other
Arthur Road	1		
Ashen Grove	2		
Braemar Avenue		1	
The Crescent		1	
Dora Road	1		1
Durnsford Avenue		1	
Durnsford Road	1	6	3
Gordondale Road		3	
Haslemere Avenue		1	
Havana Road		5	
Home Park Road	2	5	2
Kenilworth Avenue		3	2
Lucien Road		2	
Melrose Avenue		3	1
Mount Road		1	
Normanton Avenue		1	
Revelstoke Road		2	
Strathearn Road		3	
Stroud Road		2	
Vineyard Hill Road			1
Wimbledon Park			2
Wolsley Avenue		2	

AGM Notice

Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

Date: 25th October

Time: 8.00pm

Venue: St Austin's Hall, Church of Christ the King, in the
Crescent off Arthur Road

Agenda

- Minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising
- Chairman's report
- Treasurer's Report
- Front Garden Awards
- Presentation from Nigel Husband of Husband & Carpenter, Architects, on the Wimbledon Park Hall redevelopment proposals.

Guest Speakers:

- Steve Clark, Head of Planning and Public Protection, LBM
- Chris Mountford, Head of Leisure Operations, LBM

- AOB
- Election of Officers

(Draft 2005 AGM minutes will be on the website shortly)



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Wimbledon Park Residents' Association



Front Garden Awards Summer 2006

Greetings All !

I cannot believe it is a year since we last judged the gardens of Wimbledon Park, time passes faster now; old age I suppose.

For gardeners it has not been a good year, a very dry winter for which we are now suffering with a hose pipe ban, a dry, cold spring, however, we gardeners are a clever lot and we saw some lovely gardens, a lot of work in spite of the weather from a lot of people.

Here are the winners:

Best Street:

Brooklands Avenue - A lot of very pretty gardens

All Year Interest and Overall Winner:

67 Normanton Avenue - A very beautiful garden, great use of colour, helichera and box, wonderful!

Pots in unusual places, and a slate dressing bringing it all together.

Summer Interest

14 Brooklands Avenue - A lavender edged path giving a real cottage feel, a hard thing to do in a London suburb, also a good backbone of roses.

Container Garden

28 Ashen Grove - Wonderful window boxes on both floors, great colour, ferns and roses also incorporated.

Finally for the delightful young couple in Stuart Road who were working so hard clearing as we were passing, and who thought there should be a prize for effort, I look forward to seeing their garden in the finalists next year!

Good Gardening,
Michael Moore

Planning Matters

The WPRA has been involved with two planning matters recently as a result of concerns expressed by local residents.

206 Durnsford Road (Industrial Estate)

This application was for a new two storey building consisting of mainly studio offices capable of providing space for about fifty people. The proposal for the building was not the subject of objection by residents but rather the proposal to place the main entrance of the building in the Crescent rather than on the other (Durnsford Road) side. Also the proposed on-site provision for parking was very meagre and there were concerns about the long term impact on parking on the Crescent as the building is designed to cater for about fifty workers. Unfortunately the applicants had already submitted a similar proposal in 2002 which had been passed by planning (planning permission remains good for 5 years). Therefore, despite the vigorous efforts of local residents through a petition, and the WPRA and Cllr. Kerin, speaking at the Planning Committee meeting, their combined efforts were unsuccessful.

34 Durnsford Avenue

This was a retrospective application for permission to convert a single dwelling to two flats. The work carried out by the developer in this case had been the subject of extreme concern to adjoining neighbours who it seems, as the work progressed, were kept totally in the dark about the intentions of the developer. There had been considerable correspondence between the neighbours of 34 and the Council Planning department, the outcome of which had been, in their view, very unsatisfactory. Also, although not a strictly planning matter, the requirements of the Party Wall Act, which at the beginning the neighbours had been ignorant about (a fairly common situation), had been entirely ignored by the developer. As a result one of the neighbours had suffered damage to their party wall.

A number of objections were registered and the application was heard on the 31st August. The WPRA and neighbours voiced their objections at the meeting (also a letter from Cllr Kerin was read out) and ultimately the committee refused the application and agreed to serve an enforcement notice, requiring the developer to return the property to a single dwelling status.

Conversion of the Apostles – (Dundonald not Damascus)

By the time you read this article another Council Planning committee meeting will have passed into history. The agenda for the 17th August meeting was notable for the significant number of applications for conversion of single dwellings into small flats. Several of these are in the area known as the Apostles (Dundonald) and also one in Wimbledon Park. The notable feature in all cases is that these are relatively small terraced (mostly two and three bedroom) houses in a series of neighbouring roads where the houses are of very similar design. These are essentially family houses.

The greatest concern is over the loss of small family-size accommodation as well as the size and adequacy of the resultant flats. There are other real concerns about the pressure on parking – every time a house is divided into two flats it usually means at least two more cars and possibly more (there is no limit on the number car permits that can be applied for) and on the other essential services.

There is certainly pressure on the Council from the Government and the Mayor of London to increase the availability of housing in the borough and this type of development seems to be permitted under the Unitary Development Plan (UDP). However it seems to those neighbours who are directly affected and to many others who are interested in the quality of future housing in the borough that commonsense is not prevailing. Most of the development that has taken place over the last few years, in Wimbledon and elsewhere in London, has been predominantly 1 & 2 bedroom flats. There is now increasing evidence that there is a growing surplus of those categories.

If the Council carries on in the current fashion of allowing conversions of virtually any kind of property, we will end up with a massive shortage of small family accommodation and the whole balance and character of large tracts of the borough will be altered irrevocably – not for the better.

There is perhaps a chink of light at the end of the tunnel. The New Conservative administration, whilst still in the process of getting their feet (metaphorically) under the table, seem to have a much more sensible and sensitive approach to this problem.

In a recent exchange of correspondence with Cllr Diane Neil Mills (Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration) she confirmed that:

“ The Conservative Administration is opposed to the conversion of family homes into small flats given (a) the need for family housing in

Merton; (b) the importance of preserving the local street character; (c) the adverse impact on neighbouring properties (including privacy concerns); (d) the adverse impact on on-street parking; and (e) the unacceptably small size and poor quality of flats, which are often the result of such conversions.

Although we are in the process of drafting a new planning framework that will clearly reflect our policy on housing conversions as articulated above, as you are likely aware, the current Unitary Development Plan (UDP) does allow for conversions under certain circumstances. Nonetheless, we are committed to implementing our policies as soon as possible and are therefore engaged in a very important exercise to understand how this objective may best be met.”

This is extremely encouraging. Dare we hope that these good intentions will eventually be translated into reality? Only time will tell. In the meantime we will have to register our concerns and objections as strongly as we can. There will be a good number of residents and Councillors attending the meeting on Thursday giving voice to their objections.

Post Script

Since the author wrote this article part of the agenda for the meeting on the 17th August was moved back to the 31st August. This included 10 applications for conversions, most of which were in the Apostles area and one in Wimbledon Park – 34 Durnsford Road , mentioned on page 18.

The first conversion item on the agenda was the subject of an extended debate over the concerns of local residents, the loss of family accommodation, the small (inadequate) size of the resultant flats, previous decisions on applications of this kind and (being a new planning committee) some different views on the interpretation of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and related planning guidance documents. As with all applications at committee they ultimately go to a vote. In this case the application was refused, carried by the Chairman’s casting vote. This seemed to set the mood and trend of the evening and in the end all the applications for conversion were turned down. It was an extraordinary evening and signals a major sea change in the Council’s attitude towards conversions. Some of these applications may well be appealed and it will be of great interest to all parties involved to see what the planning Inspectorate’s view will be.

Iain Simpson

Wimbledon Park Hall - Redevelopment plans

The redevelopment project for Wimbledon Park Hall has entered an exciting new phase with the submission of a planning application by the developers. On the following pages we have included a selection of images and sketches of the proposed development, provided by the Architect. More detailed plans are available at the Home Office, estate agents, and will be provided at the AGM on the 25th October.

When we started out with our discussions with the Council in 2003 we did not envisage that getting to this stage would involve such a long and tortuous journey! To a large degree it has been due to the way in which the Council is obliged to proceed in order to satisfy the notion of 'best value'.

Over the past three years the WPRA has had many meetings with the developers and the Council and we have kept the community informed of progress through the Newsletter and public meetings. These Hall 'updates' can be seen on our new website and start with Christmas 2003. If you have access to the internet I commend you to that particular extract for an understanding of the background and rationale. I have also included some results of the research carried out at that time and which formed part of our Business Plan submitted to the Council in late 2003.

Model of building looking up Arthur Road and The Crescent

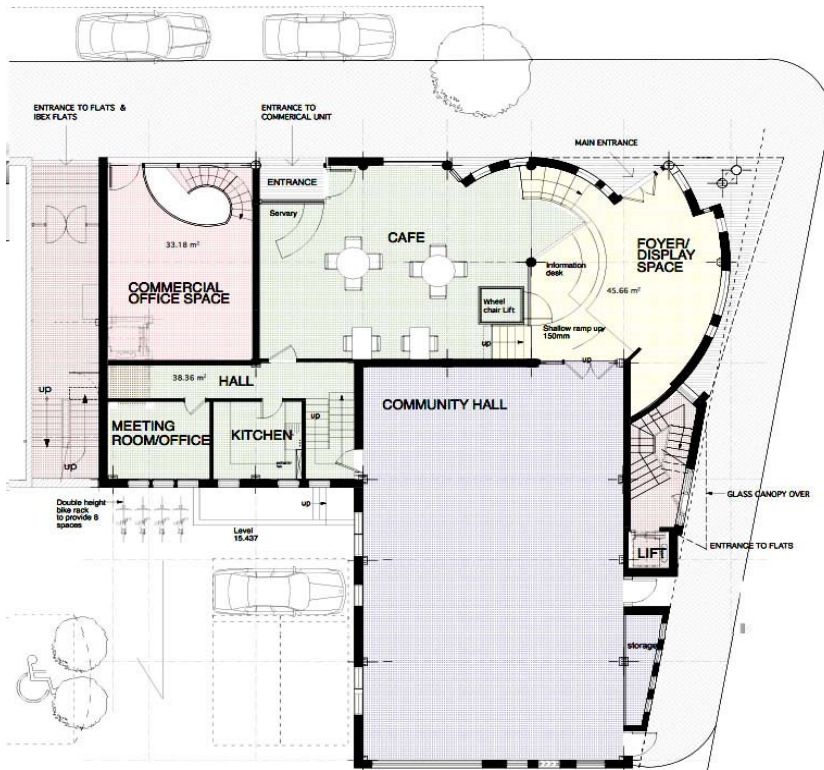




From the Crescent looking towards Arthur Road



The Arthur Road view looking towards the Crescent



Plan of Community Resource Centre

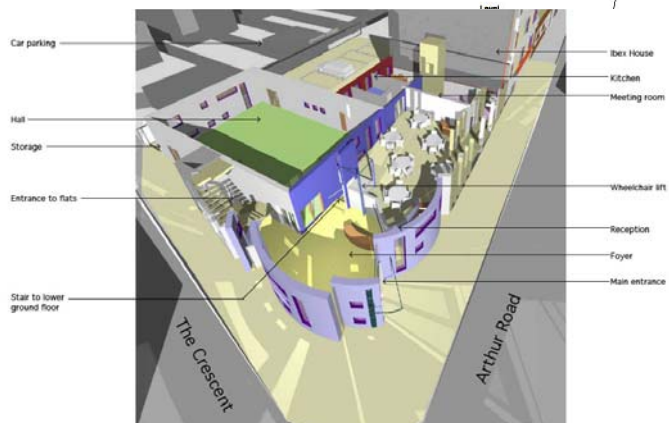


Illustration of Community Resource Centre

Architecture Centre
 01203 200000
 www.architecturecentre.co.uk



Artist impression of Café interior



Artist Impression of view towards the Foyer from the Café

Orange Phone Mast on top of Estella's Wine Bar, 169 Arthur Rd.

The future is not looking bright for Wimbledon Park residents this month, after a small sign wrapped around a lamp post which looked like a "Lost Cat" notice turned out to be yet another proposal by French mobile phone giant Orange for a mast on top of homes in Arthur Rd.

Seven alternative sites were suggested by Stephen Hammond MP back in March but all were rejected. At the time Orange were pushing for a mast on Beaumont House and actually said that all other buildings on Arthur Rd were not high enough for the mast to be effective and were too residential. Now they are??

This is Orange's THIRD attempt in the last two years to erect a phone mast in the heart of a densely populated family area, and very near to Buffer Bear Nursery School. Locals are stunned that all of their efforts in trying to convince Orange that this mast is not wanted or needed here seem to count for nothing. Many people in the community who are on the Orange network report a perfectly good signal. There are 34 masts in the local area already, do we REALLY need another one?

So why is Orange determined to have this mast in Wimbledon Park? We have just received a map from Orange showing the 'target area' that they are trying to cover. (See Map of Target Area) One third of it is in Wandsworth. They seem to have a 'not acquired' star on Heythorp Street in the Grid, which is in Wandsworth. It is also obvious from the map that the Network Rail Sidings to the right of the Target Area would be ideal siting for a new mast. We are trying to establish from Orange why this has not been proposed as a site so far.

Orange are clearly trying to site a mast in Merton that is intended to supply the residents of Wandsworth too. A possible reason why they have failed to get a mast up in Heythorp St so far, is that the Borough of Wandsworth has a much stricter policy on phone masts than Merton, especially in terms of visual impact on the area. Orange would have to go through a lengthy and expensive period of consultation, and then probable rejection. However Merton residents are still falling foul of a legal loophole which states that any mast below 15 metres in height does not need any planning permission at all. Our Borough is a walkover in comparison. At this moment Stephen Hammond is looking into producing a Private Members Bill to try to get this careless and outdated planning law changed as soon as possible.

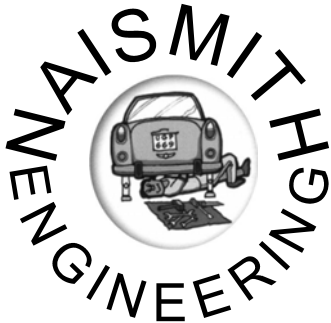
But until it is, it looks like Wimbledon Park residents will have to keep fighting the same battle with Orange until one side gives in. Rest assured Orange, it will not be the Wimbledon Park residents!!

If you would like to join the campaign then please email wpagainstorange@blueyonder.co.uk or wimbledonparkagainstorange@hotmail.co.uk

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The Wandsworth Sector in Wimbledon Park

By Sim Comfort

I recently attended a meeting organised by the London Borough of Wandsworth held at the Southfield Library. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss three Conservation Areas in Wandsworth with one of them consisting of roughly a third of the London Borough of Merton's part of Wimbledon Park. As there are some misconceptions regarding who is responsible for what in Wimbledon Park, this looks like a good opportunity to pass on information learned at this meeting.

* The London Borough of Merton section of Wimbledon Park is wholly owned by LBM as established by the Wimbledon Corporation Act of August 1914 and implemented by Parliament. Within this act, Wimbledon Corporation (Council) received the funds to purchase all of the land which comprises the Golf Club property and the LBM sector of Wimbledon Park. This purchase also included quite a lot of land which has since become Home Park Road. This land was known as 'Banky Fields' and was sold off for development to raise the funds for establishing the sporting facilities in the LBM section of the park.

- The land of the Golf Club was leased to the GC by LBM. The lease expires in 2041.

* The freehold of the land that is subject to the GC lease was sold to the All England Club in 1992.

* The Wimbledon Club sector of the park was purchased as freehold property in 1890 when the club moved to Wimbledon Park. In fact the Wimbledon Club celebrated their 150th anniversary in 2004. The reason the club chose the particular site where they are located is that the site had to be usable as a cricket pitch. Where they are is the only flat part of the park, and as such I wouldn't be surprised if the site was originally the location of a cricket pitch created by Capability Brown for Earl Spencer, but there is no proof of this.

So that brings us to today, with the only holding left that belongs to LBM being the northern sector of the park.

Within the LBM sector you have a political boundary running through about a third of the park, which identifies a section that comes under the

auspices of the London Borough of Wandsworth. It is important to keep in mind that Wandsworth do not own any of the land, but they do have jurisdiction over their sector of the park.

This jurisdiction has been modified wherein LBM and LBW have formally agreed that LBM are responsible for the day to day care and maintenance of the park. LBM also benefit from all of the revenue generated by the park.

The area of responsibility that has been retained by Wandsworth is with regard to planning and planning approvals. So, as an example, for the construction of new gates at the Wimbledon Park Road entrance to Wimbledon Park, planning permission was applied for and gained from the London Borough of Wandsworth because the site location fell within the Wandsworth jurisdiction of the park.

You will also see from the attached map (thanks to LBW for permission to reproduce it) that the line that marks the spheres of planning responsibility passes directly through the Stadium in the park. I understand that the proposed creation of the stadium was met with stiff resistance from LBW, but in the end the objections were over ruled and the stadium was built.

Although Wandsworth have no plans for their sector of the park, there is a welcome move afoot that may result in the replacement of the slab fencing along Wimbledon Park Road with a railed fence that would have a defensive hedge on the park side of the fence. A big improvement I think, which may lead the way toward the full replacement of the slab fencing around the rest of the park.



MARTIANS

One evening during the recent heat wave, when the temperature had dropped sufficiently to allow one to move, I wandered out into the garden looking for tennis balls to lob back to my cricketing young neighbour. There, in the middle of the lawn, was an odd shape which proved to be a small, perfectly-formed, pink Wellington boot - only slightly nibbled round the edge.

A few days later while pottering around savouring the scents coming in from the garden through the open French windows, I went upstairs for a little while. When I came back and started to tidy up, I found a sock, repeat "a" sock. On looking round I suddenly saw its mate about a metre away - half chewed.

A few days more and treasure number three appeared - a well chewed gardening glove, lying on the patio.

While intrigued by the findings I noted with some alarm that the gifts were dropped nearer and nearer the house so that to get the sock the visitor had had to go into the house. From then on the doors were kept shut when the room was unoccupied.

I never saw the intruders but am prepared to hazard a guess that they were not little green men but rather gingery furry bodies more commonly known as fox cubs.

They remained invisible until the next evening when I spied one sniffing round the compost.

She chose an avocado pear half and consumed it with relish.

Pat Gomez




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Another successful Championship

You will no doubt have noticed the wonderful hanging flower baskets, which have adorned the lampposts in Arthur Road since late June. These have been supplied courtesy of The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC). This is the first time we have been included in what is a massive hanging basket operation that precedes The Championships and is maintained until September.

Rather too late last year the WPRA decided to investigate the price of supplying double baskets on the lampposts in Arthur Road (just the shops, not the whole of Arthur Road) and found that to have them supplied and maintained from June to September would cost in the region of £2000. This was something we definitely could not afford. This year I decided to contact the AELTC to see if they might be prepared to include us with all the baskets they supply in the area. I spoke to Richard Oxborrow the Championships' Coordinator who, despite the closeness of the beginning of Wimbledon Fortnight and all that it entails, was most considerate of my request and agreed to talk to the suppliers. A fortnight later the baskets appeared. I think you will agree that was most impressive and the baskets have made a great addition to the street scene over the summer.

After the hiatus of the fortnight had receded I decided I would like to meet Richard and find out a bit more about what he does and the general running of the AELTC and The Championships.

Richard has been with the AELTC for the last thirteen years. Prior to that he was in the Royal Air Force and used to manage all the Service personnel who worked at the Championships. He has a fascinating, if not slightly intimidating, job of being Championships Coordinator. This means he is at the centre of everything; He deals with many of the contractors and service suppliers and as far as I can see just about everything that moves on site. He is obviously a man who relishes the challenge and it is clear that he enjoys his job enormously – which is a refreshing change!

Despite the apparent competition from the World Cup this year, Richard told me that attendance figures were as expected. It is clear that the proceeds from very reasonable ticket prices is fairly small compared with the overall income earned from the TV coverage to over 180 countries and the marketing of 'Wimbledon' branded goods around the world. The Championships produces a substantial injection of funds for the Lawn Tennis Association who annually receive in the region of £25m for the benefit of British tennis.

No sooner was this year's Championships over than work resumed on the current stage of the Club's Long Term Plan, started in 1994; this involves the demolition and



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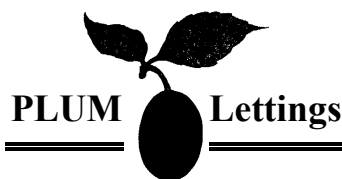
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(Continued from page 30)

redevelopment of parts of Centre Court, the removal of the existing roof and the installation of a new translucent and retractable roof. This work will be completed for the 2009 Championships but for 2007, there will be no roof at all on Centre Court so fingers are crossed at the Club for good weather!

Richard explained that the final stage of the Long Term Plan will be to improve the facilities at the south of the grounds. In the meantime, the Club is already in discussion with the London organising committee regarding its appointment as the site for Olympic tennis in 2012!

Overall, the complement of permanent staff at the Club is relatively small and it is obvious that those famous two weeks every year keep them all extremely busy. However, in between all the planning for this iconic, international event, it is impressive to note how much the AELTC has contributed and continues to contribute to the local community.

Some examples are:

- Since 1988, until recently, the renewal/refurbishment/maintenance of the Wimbledon Park tennis courts, including floodlighting and the refurbishment of

(Continued on page 36)

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Why celebrate the Wandle?

Once a year the Wandle Valley Festival is held to celebrate this fascinating River that is so much part of the borough's history. There are many reasons to celebrate the existence of the River Wandle.

Historically The Wandle is most famous for the fast flowing waters that used to power some 60 mills and attracted a wide variety of industries. During the 18th Century, a time of great industrialisation, it gained a reputation for being the 'hardest working river in the world.' Such was the level of activity that it spawned the world's first Iron Railway. Today it reportedly remains the location for a fifth of London's manufacturing Industry.

The river has two sources, in Waddon and Carshalton, and flows into the Thames at Wandsworth. It represents a wonderful green corridor, linking Croydon Sutton and Merton to the Thames Path at Wandsworth as it meanders through Ravensbury Park, Morden Hall Park, Deen City Farm, Wandle Park, Garrat Park and King Georges Park.

The Wandle Trail which runs along the river's length, is a predominantly off -road shared use path that links open spaces, recreational facilities industrial estates and communities. Walking or cycling it presents a wonderful contrast from the busy suburbia that surrounds it.

The Wandle Forum, through the South London Partnership has been formed to explore the GLA recommendation that the Wandle Valley be created into a Regional Park. The Valley itself represents a potential area of some 500 acres. This ambitious project if successful will bring a new vitality to the area providing not only a valuable asset for recreation and wildlife but also a unique location offering homes and businesses a desirable environment in which to flourish.

You can find out more information about the Wandle and the Festival from the following websites. Wandle Industrial Museum:- www.wandle.org... www.wandlevalleyfestival.org.uk...www.wandletrail.org www.southlondonpartnership.co.uk

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the public lavatories and gates in the Park.

- the floodlighting of St. Mary's Church.

Ongoing:

- The Wimbledon 'Junior Tennis Initiative' (part of 'The Road to Wimbledon'); a special All England Club coaching team has run tennis and general sports skills training sessions in nearly 30 state schools nominated by the London Boroughs of Merton and Wandsworth. All pupils (between 3 and 14 yrs) are invited to attend FREE coaching and skills sessions at the Club on most weekends throughout the year; those with a particular talent receive further training.
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- an annual donation to the Wimbledon Village Business Association for decorative schemes in the Village plus the provision of floral dressing, hanging baskets etc. on all routes to The Championships, including the railway stations
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- regular donations to other local charities.

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Wild British Orchid found in Wimbledon Park garden



Gail's Bee Orchid in June 2006

Wimbledon Park resident Gail, a keen gardener, was weeding her vegetable patch when she suddenly realised she was about to pull out a rather unusual, dainty flower. On close inspection, she felt it could well be a wild orchid.

This was confirmed by Wimbledon Park resident Dave Dawson, who, until recently, was the Mayor of London's Biodiversity Manager. He told her that Bee Orchids (*Ophrys apifera*) are quite rare, but do occasionally appear in unexpected areas. Their appearance in a given site is somewhat mysterious, but they can remain there for a few years, then vanish without warning !

Gail manages her vegetable patch as organically as possible, and was thrilled by the arrival of this British native orchid in her garden. She reported its presence to various environmental agencies in London. She very much hopes that the orchid will stay with her for a few years.

It is now happily setting seeds, and with a bit of luck, might spread to other gardens in Wimbledon Park. This shows that it pays to use gentle gardening methods and to avoid weed killer or drastic actions. Who knows what other little treasures might be hiding in *your* garden !

Cecile Bridgens

W.P.R.A. Committee October 2006

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