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Christmas edition 2015

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**Editorial help needed. Contact Iain Simpson on 020 8947 1301
email: iainsimpson@imi-consulting.com**

Chairman's Report

AGM report

The AGM took place on the 13th October. There was a good turnout of residents and all three Councillors attended. We were particularly pleased to have the company of our MP Stephen Hammond. The Chairman's report recapped on a variety of subjects which have been largely covered in the newsletter over the last year. There were a lot of questions about the progress of the Greyhound Stadium application and also the implications of the Crossrail2 proposals; in particular where the tunnel might start.

The financial position of the Association remains healthy, largely due to the support of advertisers in the newsletter and to a lesser extent to subscriptions. We are very grateful to Kathy Blackburn who has handled advertising for the last eight years and has now passed the baton on to Pamela Hunt. Collection of subscriptions remains a problem until we can find someone to organise it properly. I am also looking for someone to help with the newsletter and eventually take over the editorship.

The Committee continues to be very active on behalf of local residents but is always looking for new blood to get involved with the many areas of interest. If you are interested, either get in touch with me or come along to one of our meetings and see what is on the agenda. Meetings are held every second Tuesday of the month except August and December.

The Wimbledon Park Community Trust

Some of the newer residents may not be aware that the Association organised three fairs in 2008, 2009 and 2010, with the help of many local residents, to raise money for the New Community Hall which was planned at that time. This produced a net profit of just over £19,000 and served to cover legal and other expenses in the period before and during the construction period. The balance remaining has been paid over to the Trust in two tranches, the last of which was in 2015.

The Hall was taken over by the Trust from the Council in February 2014 and over the next few months managed to attract several regular hirers who, in fact, are still with us. Since that time the Hall has been busy with a combination of regular users and other people booking the Hall for birthday parties and family gatherings.

By October we had found Yasmin to take a lease on and run Arthurs Café.

Our first accounting period runs from October 2013, when the company was first formed until 31st March 2015. Overall the trading was satisfactory and a reasonable surplus has been achieved.

When we have completed our second year of trading, the Trustees will review the finances, in the light of maintaining an adequate reserve fund for improvements and maintenance etc., and then consider whether there is sufficient available to be able to offer small grants to any local groups or organisations. When that time comes we will seek input from the local community.

The Accounts for the Trust can be found on the Association's website.

Discussions have been taking place between a local residents' committee and First Base, the developers, on the proposals for the Haslemere Industrial Estate. There is an interesting article on pages 6,8 and 10 by David Clare, Chairman of the HIE residents' committee commenting on these discussions.

I spoke to David Rothwell, Development Manager for First Base, earlier this week and he asked me to include this statement:

"We are taking some time out to respond to the community's comments, those of Merton Council and Merton's Design Review Panel. There are technical issues to overcome in terms of flooding and contamination that, to a certain extent, will have an influence on the design of a redeveloped site. The design is evolving and we want to take the time necessary to make sure we get things right. In terms of next steps, once we have a revised design, we will be arranging another public consultation along with separate meetings with our immediate neighbours to talk in more detail about the scheme".

Greyhound Stadium redevelopment

The consultation period on the revised application finished in early October. Our request for an extension of the short consultation period was not even acknowledged.

Taking an overall view of the papers submitted in the revised application, it is difficult to find any serious responses to the objections raised by ourselves and many others. No attempt has been made to offer serious infrastructure improvements to deal with the traffic, pedestrian, parking and crowd problems that will inevitably arise. The Plough Lane - Haydons Road crossing is already considered at over capacity and no improvements are envisaged. Access to St George's Hospital on match days, when road closure is envisaged, remains a major problem.

It appears that the applicants are using flood remodelling information from the Environment Agency which is not available to the general public so there is no way we can test the veracity of their statements regarding the flood capability of their Designs. This seems to be entirely wrong in our view and we are pursuing this.

Although nothing formal has been announced, we understand that the stadium application will be on the agenda for the planning meeting on the 10th December. We hope that the committee will pay close attention to the objections that have been raised and reach their decision based on current Local and National planning rules, as they should. However, the fact is that the Labour administration have a very large majority in Merton. The split of the planning committee is heavily weighted accordingly. The support for this application has been overt throughout by Councillor Judge, the Cabinet member responsible for Planning and also Cllr. Alambritis, Leader of the Council. Despite the protestations of Cllr. Judge that he is not a member of the Planning Committee and the independence of that committee, we know that political pressure to approve the application will be strong. Also the Chairman of the Planning Committee is Linda Kirby who is the wife of Cllr. Judge.

Iain Simpson

The Height of Luxury?

David Clare

(Chair of HIE Residents' Committee)

Property Developer First Base are looking to redevelop the Haslemere Industrial Estate (<http://www.firstbase-haslemere.london>), and have big plans for up to 120 high-end homes. HIE Residents' Committee recently formed to represent local residents who have some serious questions and concerns.

First Base held two Public Exhibitions at St Barnabas Church, Southfields in June and September this year. The early engagement with local residents is commendable and uncharacteristic for city developers. The proposals are still at an early



stage in the planning process, and First Base have shown initial signs of being open to local views and seem to be keen to develop the design in response.

There are some attractive features to their concept: creating a new 'street' with residences either side; forming a new open space to potentially connect to the Wandle Trail; and keeping the development a respectful distance from nearby homes.

Contd on page 8

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However, there is a growing sense for those of us in the HIE Residents' Committee, and many who have emailed us in support, that First Base has not yet changed the design to adequately respond to the issues that have been raised with them. This is particularly true around the number of homes and the height of the development. It is a fundamental issue as this relates to many other concerns raised: pressure on local amenities; school places; parking; public transport; car traffic; doctors surgeries; drainage and sewers; and so on. Reducing the scale of this development would help ease the growing pressure on our local infrastructure.

If First Base's own literature is to be taken at face value, they state the following:

"Our approach is to work closely with local communities as we develop our plans and to design projects that respond to the local environment and context."

"We want to make sure that our proposals fit in well with the existing buildings in the area... The neighbouring buildings range from two storey terraced homes to five storey commercial buildings."

If that is the case then why propose two types of residence so out-of-keeping with the local context? Firstly, on the west side of the site, their plans show one long terrace (24 homes) including many 4-storey townhouses. However the local precedent is 2-storey terraced blocks of 4 homes with breaks in between. Some homes have a third storey but it is in the loft and does not impact the street view.

Secondly, these townhouses are overshadowed (literally) by a multi-storey block of nearly 100 flats! First Base describe this as a 7-storey building but it is worth noting that the commercial units on the ground floor are higher than a residential storey, and make it more like 8 conventional residential storeys in height. Importantly, Merton Council have identified the HIE site and surrounding area as 'low-rise' (up to 3 storeys high) and not suitable for high-rise buildings, which they define as higher than 6 storeys. First Base seem to be quite at odds with this guidance.

Close to the development, but in the Borough of Wandsworth, there has been an unwelcome recent addition to the skyline. Banham Security's new headquarters has imposed itself onto Merton residents with little or no consultation. The larger building is 5 commercial storeys high (the equivalent of 7 residential storeys), and First Base have informed us that their flats will be even taller than this. However the Banham building is located in a commercial part of Earlsfield, in another borough, and cannot be used as a comparison or precedent in relation to this residential scheme.

Contd on page 10



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‘Very early artist’s impression of how the development might look. We understand this is currently under review by First Base’

First Base make admirable claims about the respectfulness of their developments to the local context, but so far this has not been followed through in the design itself, even though the issue of scale was raised as a concern at the first public exhibition and a number of times since.

We recognise that the financial viability of the site is important to them as the developer, but in such a high-value area they don’t need 120 homes to make this a viable scheme. Maximising on developer profit should not come at the expense of local residents’ amenity and the distinctive and attractive character of the local area.

Are First Base starting high to allow for a bit of ‘chiselling’ down through the planning process? Or will they unveil much more considered plans at their next public exhibition?

If their next plans have significantly reduced the height of the flats and make the townhouses more in keeping then we will be pleasantly surprised and more supportive of the development. If not, they could find that the considerable effort they are making to get the local community on side may have the opposite effect. We are hopeful that this is not the case and, as per First Base’s stated aims, a sympathetic and attractive development emerges for Wimbledon Park.

The HIE Residents’ Committee currently represents over 90 individuals from 15 surrounding streets. We have also consulted with Wimbledon Park Residents’ Association, local Ward Councillors, Stephen Hammond MP and Wimbledon Society Planning Committee who share our concerns over the inappropriate scale of this development.

If you want to connect, get involved or be kept up to date with progress, please e-mail us at HIEresidentscommittee@gmail.com

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Letter from a Wimbledon Park resident.

DOOR TO DOOR “EX-CON” SALESMEN – AN OUTDATED AND INTIMIDATING PRACTICE THAT SHOULD BE STOPPED

When I first moved to the leafy, quiet suburb of Wimbledon Park 12 years ago, I was struck by how trusting people in my neighbourhood were. Within a few days of moving, my cat Hermione disappeared at about 10pm at night. I called her from the back garden and then in desperation I started knocking on doors up and down the street to see if she had got lost in someone else’s garden. Almost every door I knocked on opened up at about 11pm at night and people allowed me in to call from their back gardens etc., until I eventually found her.

Maybe it is due to the trusting, generous nature of this area that I also noticed, as a new resident of Wimbledon Park, how many people were knocking on my door trying to sell me things. This simply didn’t happen, or very rarely, in my old neighbourhood of Queen’s Park, NW6.

Sadly, I no longer open up the door to cold callers as I have had several intimidating experiences from bogus charity collectors and “ex prisoners” trying to sell me household cleaning goods. The patter is usually that this is their last week on probation, in fact their very last day on probation in which to make a sale and they would really like it if I could help them make a go of it on the outside. Then when the same lad comes back the next week and repeats the same story you realise that it’s just a con. Having bought the odd miniscule duster in the past to try to help out, I now refuse as gently as I can and apologise. It’s not their fault that the products that they have been given are flimsy copies of the real thing and ridiculously overpriced. But it’s always very awkward and I feel intimidated and vulnerable standing at my door in the half light, rejecting the lad yet again.

These “ex cons” are, however, clearly getting extremely frustrated by the lack of response from householders these days and I believe the experience is making them dangerous and resentful of the general public. My experience 2 weeks ago proves this point.

At about 6.30pm there was very loud, aggressive knocking on the front door. As usual, I didn’t answer it as I used to, but went upstairs to a front bedroom window where I could see down to the porch. I thought the man must be another Amazon delivery for a neighbour but it was dark, so difficult to see properly. The aggressive knocking came again and I was worried about the stained glass in the door shattering. I called down to this tall man dressed in black in his mid twenties to ask what he wanted. This is what he shouted up at me, in a thick Geordie accent at the top of his voice:

“Oh for (expletive) sake!! Surely YOU are going to buy something from me!! Every (expletive) door on your street is not answering. How do you expect me to go straight and not go back to selling Crack again!! I’d rather be back inside! It’s so much easier than THIS!!”.

I replied that I was really sorry but there’s nothing that I want to buy either...” I wanted to say that I wasn’t surprised that no one answered the door to him with a knock and attitude like that but I was scared so tried to be calm. *Contd on Page 16*



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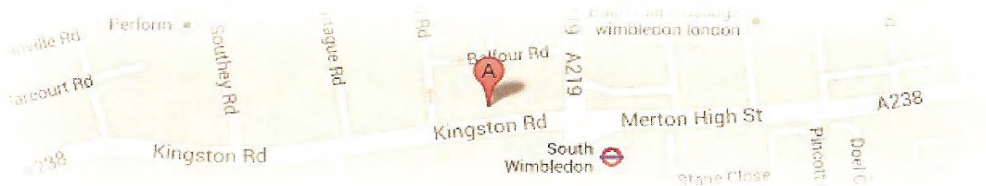
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He continued shouting up at me “Look at you, Rapunzel. In your nice (expletive) house with your rich (expletive) parents and nice kids and nice life. Come on!! I need to make a sale or I’m gonna go back to selling (expletive) drugs! Help me. It’s so hard, help me!!”

I replied that I didn’t know what to say. I said my parents aren’t rich and I don’t have children.... I can’t really talk to you when you’re like this... so I’m going to have to go. Saying sorry again I closed the window slowly so as not to seem too rejecting.

At the top of his voice as he backed off “AHHH!! you rich (expletive) with your big (expletive) houses and your nice cars and nice lives!! You’ve got it easy. You have no (expletive) idea!!

And I thought, no, I have no...idea...what it must be like to come out of prison to then face total rejection as you try to earn a living selling inferior trash that nobody wants. I was so intimidated and scared by the experience that I dialled 101, the police non-emergency number and told them about this man, as I feared he would do someone harm that night - through anger and possibly to get himself arrested and back inside. As I was explaining what had happened the receptionist said she was sending some PCs around straight away to put me at my ease and try to find him.

I couldn’t believe the speedy response of the WP Police. They were at my door within 15 minutes, had taken a description and were out looking for this guy and his mate. Before the police left I told them that I feel very strongly that the public are intimidated and pressured by these young ex-cons who come cold calling in our area, often in the evening when it’s getting dark. I believe that this form of “government run rehabilitation” is out-dated and causes more harm than good, as it alienates these young men even more from society.

PC Joe Kempton then explained to me that this door to door selling isn’t actually part of the Prison probation programme at all. These are private schemes run by a gangmaster who will have collected together a group of plausible youngsters, often from up North, kitted them out with the goods and the badges, driven them to a “rich” area and set them to work. Any unsold goods and the money have to be given to the leader who pays the men a pittance. If they don’t achieve a certain level of sales, they get into trouble for not covering the cost of their “free” accommodation. Then they get stuck in a vicious cycle of desperation and poverty until something has to give. PC Rigby then told me that actual prisoners are offered training in trades and skills in prison and can come out with qualifications to be able to work successfully in society. He has a bricklayer friend who learnt his trade inside and earns a good living.

Well, I learnt a lot that night. The Police were very reassuring and I hope will agree with me when I ask our MP Stephen Hammond if he will please bring this dreadful, Dickensian, potentially dangerous practice to the notice of the House of Commons and help to get it stopped. This kind of exploitation should be made illegal, surely.

Name withheld but name and address supplied.

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A big big thank you to Tree Wardens, Jane Plant, Dave Welch, Jonathan Mathews and Peter Fischer and local residents Ivan Scott, Spike Clark and Carole Houghton for all their help in pruning the fruit hedge in the park. The hedge was planted to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 and had become quite overgrown. We had a lovely sunny day on 31st October, which allowed us to prune back the Hawthorn, Elder and Plum trees, which had taken over and were blocking out the light and air to the apple, cherry and pear trees. The following weekend the weather was not so kind and it was quite a wet day but we did manage to spread most of the bark chippings around the fruit hedge. As we have pruned quite hard it should make it a lot easier next year for residents to pick the fruit when it is available.

Once again a big thank you to all of you who helped.



EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

Thank you to those of you who responded to my article in the last newsletter. It was good to see that there are quite a few of you who would be very interested in using exercise equipment if it was installed in the park. I am currently gathering some more information with the intention of writing to the Council in the New Year with our request. I will keep you all informed of my progress. *Pam Hunt*

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The Complexity of Modern Families

The complexity of modern families and stepfamilies means that it is vital that remarried couples get the details of their wills right, in order to protect their intentions after death.

The latest High Court figures show a 700% increase in disputes over wills during the past 5 years. This rapid rise seems to have been caused mostly by a failure to make flexible provision for spouses and children within stepfamilies.

In cases where a parent remarries, for example, a simple, straightforward will relies on the good intentions of the surviving partner to provide in their will for their estate to be divided between children and stepchildren. Yet allegiances change, and it can cause friction when the intentions of the deceased partner are not adhered to.

Creating a new will is especially important in the case of remarriage because any existing will is automatically cancelled out when somebody remarries. Legally, you have to start from scratch in determining your legacy. Practically, too, it makes sense because the introduction of stepchildren into a family inevitably adds complexity.

The answer is to strike a balance in the will between providing for your spouse after your death, and ensuring that the desired inheritance for your children is protected by law.

A common means of achieving this is to stipulate that the surviving partner can occupy the house without ownership being transferred outright. This ensures that the deceased partner's share of the property will then pass to their children on the partner's death, a condition that can only be changed with the children's consent.

The same thinking can be applied to other assets. For example, specifying a life interest trust will provide your spouse with a regular income but protects the underlying capital for your children.

As the High Court figures demonstrate, disputes arise when there is no will, or the will does not make appropriate provision for the surviving spouse and children of the deceased. With home-made wills ambiguities can creep in so that intentions are neither clear nor legally effective. In all of these circumstances, a disinherited child could then make a claim against the estate.

The rapid rise reported in these figures reinforces the importance of long-term planning, to guarantee both the emotional and legal legacy.

If you require any further information then please have no hesitation in contacting Andrew F. Hill at McGlennons Solicitors:

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By Andrew F. Hill

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MERTON RESIDENTS HEALTHCARE FORUM (MRHF)

We are a group of Merton Residents who set up the Forum in 2012 to find out more about how the NHS works in Merton and what health care will be available to us in the future.

MRHF's aim is 'to promote opportunities for local people to have a greater say in local healthcare and to stimulate informed, independent debate as a contribution to the development of high quality healthcare provision in the NHS.

We have a mailing list and we circulate information about local developments and consultations to keep people informed and encourage people to get involved. For example: *'Help us build a new NHS in south west London - Issues paper'* sets out a number of challenges faced by the NHS in southwest London and the changes that are being considered. This is available at www.swlccgs.nhs.uk/issues-paper

Our Steering Group also provides commentary and feedback on key policy documents and we have run our own open meetings on some important topics.

The Forum is not aligned to any particular party nor to any pressure group which makes it possible for us to join together as local residents across the Borough.

MRHF always seeks ideas and feedback. If you would like to join our mailing list please contact mrhf2012@hotmail.co.uk We would also like to hear from anyone who has an interest in joining the Steering Group or just generally becoming more involved.



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Allegation	Method	Address	Date from	T i m e from	Date to	T i m e to
Burglary in a Dwelling	At 0700 hours victim1 found the front porch door ajar and his bicycle had gone. The shoe rack had been opened but nothing taken or damaged.	MELROSE AVENUE	12/08/2015	30	12/08/2015	700
Burglary in Other Buildings	Person entered postal room and damaged postbox for number 17, breaking the lock and bending the door of box.	DURNSFORD ROAD	12/08/2015	2000	15/08/2015	1230
Burglary in Other Buildings	Suspects have entered the bike shed to rear of venue, and at some point in the last 2 weeks, exact date unknown, have cut lock and taken pedal cycle.	DURNSFORD ROAD	09/08/2015	1400	23/08/2015	1415
Criminal Damage To M/V	Had a party on saturday night while the 16 year olds parents were away, victim believes that a youth from this party damaged his vehicle	HOME PARK ROAD	15/08/2015	2100	15/08/2015	2359
Criminal Damage To M/V		PLOUGH LANE	23/08/2015	800	23/08/2015	830
Criminal Damage To Other Bldg	Ground floor window to the side of the property completely smashed. Approximate size 45/45cm. Nothing at the scene that could have been used to smash the window.	ARTHUR ROAD	22/08/2015	2100	22/08/2015	2130
Criminal Damage To Other Bldg	Victim left venue 29/08/15 at 2000 hours, window in tact. Victim returned 30/08/2015 at 1100 hours to find window had 2 damaged parts. Found rocks near window on floor. Victim witnessed suspect 1 outside address after hearing 2 loud bangs.	HAYDONS ROAD	29/08/2015	2000	30/08/2015	1130
Other Criminal Damage	By suspect(s) unknown cutting hole in fence, causing damage.	WEIR ROAD	05/08/2015	2300	06/08/2015	700
Other Theft	Driver filled her vehicle with diesel fuel and then drove off without making payment	PLOUGH LANE	04/08/2015	940		
Other Theft	Theft of Senior Rail card	PLOUGH LANE	12/08/2015	1030	12/08/2015	1100
Other Theft	Theft of mail from victims post box located in the communal post room of flats where she resides.	DURNSFORD ROAD	13/08/2014	1200	13/08/2015	1
Other Theft	Victim 1 was attending a children's club with his brother and unknown suspects have taken items out of his rucksack whilst unattended	WIMBLEDON PARK	20/08/2015	1000	20/08/2015	1200
Other Theft	By unknown suspect/s stealing a large red plastic wheelie bin from location	ARTHUR ROAD	26/08/2015	900	28/08/2015	900
Other Theft	Suspects have taken 2 of victims parcels from the communal area of the block, and discarded one of them in the communal bins, recovered by victim. 1 parcel of unknown value outstanding	WEIR ROAD	29/08/2015	1530	29/08/2015	1537

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Other Theft	Victims mobile phone taken from her bag by person(s) unknown whilst in the park	SAILING CEN - TRE,WIMBLEDON PARK	02/08/2015	1200	02/08/2015	1300
Other Theft Person	By person(s) unknown stealing victims wallet from her handbag when attending the venue. Attempts were also made to use victims bank cards.	PLOUGH LANE	09/08/2015	1215	09/08/2015	1230
Theft From M/V	Apparently between dates and times shown unknown suspect/s stole rear lights from a parked, secured and unattended motor vehicle by unknown means and left venue undetected.	HAVELOCK ROAD	01/08/2015	1700	02/08/2015	1000
Theft From M/V	By an unknown suspect forcing their way into the lorry and stealing money from the cab and forcing the ignition barrel	WEIR ROAD	07/08/2015	1500	10/08/2015	800
Theft From M/V	Entry gained into victims vehicle by person(s) unknown, no signs of forced entry but items taken from within	NORMANTON AVENUE	10/08/2015	1700	11/08/2015	445
Theft From M/V	Suspects unknown have taken full set of front lights from vehicle while it was parked in the street outside the venue shown.	ASHEN GROVE	11/08/2015	1900	12/08/2015	800
Theft From M/V	Vehicle broken into and had some items stolen at some point between 2200 hour	DURNSFORD ROAD	10/08/2015	2200	12/08/2015	1010
Theft From M/V	Theft from MV	LEOPOLD ROAD	14/08/2015	1035	14/08/2015	1040
Theft From M/V	Suspect has stolen tomtom from glove box of vehicle	HASLEMERE AVENUE	14/08/2015	1	14/08/2015	900
Theft From M/V	Theft from motor vehicle of small amount of loose change.	DORA ROAD	16/08/2015	1900	17/08/2015	730
Theft From M/V	By suspect unknown entering vehicle and making off with one ladies bag in direction unknown.	ASHEN GROVE	17/08/2015	2330	18/08/2015	930
Theft From M/V	Victim witnessed 3 unknown males tampering with his moped. Victim called police. Police attended. Suspects had made off. Victim had property stolen from vehicle.	VINEYARD HILL ROAD	23/08/2015	429	23/08/2015	433
Theft From M/V	Someone has broken into the vehicle and taken cash £10 in change from front compartment	THE CRESCENT	23/08/2015	1730	24/08/2015	1035
Theft From M/V	3 suspects, some on a moped, searched through vehicle on 3 separate occasions and stole the property listed.	ENDEAVOUR WAY	16/08/2015	1150	16/08/2015	1450
Theft/Taking of M/V	Victim left his moped parked at the side of his work premises. 2 suspects have come in on a moped, stolen his moped and rode away.	WEIR ROAD	03/08/2015	1153	03/08/2015	1155
Theft/Taking of Pedal Cycles	Theft of pedal cycle	PITT CRESCENT	05/08/2015	630	05/08/2015	630

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HASLEMERE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

The evolving proposals by First Base for the potential redevelopment of the Haslemere Industrial Estate have recently been the subject of a second public consultation exercise with the first having taken place back in June 2015. A third public consultation is expected to unveil detailed design proposals incorporating the feedback from the public to the previous exercises (your views) prior to the submission of the planning application by the end of the year.

For those who have missed the opportunity to see the proposals, all is available for scrutiny in the developer web page www.firstbase-haslemere.london as well as in the leaflets that have been widely circulated in the neighbourhood of the site. Regardless of your views on the proposals, the developer deserves congratulations for the effort in involving the community in this process.

The proposals are for a residential led mixed scheme incorporating some commercial and flexible workspace in an improved landscaped setting with some new public realm open to the River Wandle.

The aspirations for the site adopted by Merton Borough Council in July 2014 are encapsulated in the Merton Sites and Policies Plan, Site Proposal 70, also easily accessible through L B Merton – Planning web page if you search for Wimbledon Sites only.

Site Proposal 70 states the current use as Business and Industrial, and the allocated use as Business/Light Industrial (B1) or a suitable employment led redevelopment. Amongst the issues related to the site, it mentions:

Continuous space for employment in this area.

Suitable mitigation measures to address the fact that the site is within the functional floodplain (Flood Zone 3b).

Mitigating potential parking, traffic and safety impacts on neighbouring streets and local amenity.

The proposals by First Base, although addressing another of the crucial problems affecting London, the provision of new residential units and in particular we assume the provision of affordable accommodation, entail a change of use and a change of policy for the site by the Council. For we members of the neighbourhood it is very difficult to assess what impact such a decision would have in the strategic view of protecting employment in Merton.

We are now, and will be then, in the hands of our local representatives when the time comes for a decision on the forthcoming planning application for the site.

In the meantime we look forward to learning how the proposals develop and will deal with the floodplain issue; the traffic and parking issue where a solution is a bit more ingenious than simply denying prospecting buyers of Street Parking Permits by the Council; the affordable accommodation issue. On the architectural design front, the illustrations provided so far seem promising but more clarity behind the rationale of the proposed massing and scale of the River front buildings seems required: why 7 storeys in height, why not less or more?

Mario Avendano, RIBA



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Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP)

News update for members, November 2015

£3,000 grant for tree planting

We are delighted to announce that FOWP has been offered a grant of £3,000 from the London Tree and Woodland Community Grant Scheme, to fund the planting of trees in Horse Close Wood. Merton Council has given permission and is to match the funding. The planting will take place before spring, and will be a great opportunity for local people including schoolchildren to get involved.

Golf club votes to reject offer from AELTC

In June 2014, the All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) announced it would not be renewing the lease of Wimbledon Park Golf Club, which is due to expire in 2041. It has now approached the golf club with an offer to buy it out of the lease ahead of time, presumably to facilitate its own development plans for the site. However, we understand that 60% of members have voted to reject the offer. The AELTC bought the freehold of the golf club from Merton Council in 1993 for £5.3m.

National Grid works

The recent works in the park, to repair electricity cabling, have been completed but unfortunately the contractors discovered corrosion to an underground tank in Horse Close Wood, meaning further works are necessary. An oak tree, a lime and two ashes will have to be removed, in addition to the lime tree that has already been felled. The area will be cordoned off again and heavy machinery will be coming into park. Works are expected to last until the New Year. The positive aspect to all this is that we hope the removal of the trees will give us the chance to restore a glade there, allowing other plant species to come through.

Litter picking makes a real difference

Our litter-picking group, set up in August, now meets regularly on the second Sunday of the month. We work together to clear up the litter in the woods and hedgerows of the park, which the Council team don't have time to tackle. Our most recent session on 8 November removed six bin bags of rubbish. Gloves and litter pickers are provided, so if you fancy lending a hand we'll be delighted to see you. Just turn up at 10am at the tennis kiosk by the café. Next meeting Sunday 13 December 2015.

Contd on page 32

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from Pearl Escapes



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Last class before Christmas Thurs 10th Dec 2015, first class of the New Year Mon 4th Jan 2016

New 20mph zone introduced

The new 20mph zone, supported by local residents, is now in force on the Southfields Grid and Revelstoke Road, and we hope this will encourage drivers to approach the park more carefully.

Green shoots in former bowling area

The lawn in the old bowling area, where the Food Festival and children's fair were held earlier in the year, was reseeded by Merton Council and now looks in better condition than it has been for some years. Hopefully people will soon be allowed back in to enjoy it.

Goldfinches thriving

You may have seen in the news recently that goldfinches are one of the few British songbird species whose numbers are on the increase – nearly doubling between 2002 and 2012, according to the British Trust for Ornithology. This finding is borne out by our resident ecologist Dave Dawson's research: his counts in Wimbledon Park show four times the number of goldfinches nowadays compared with 30 years ago. The wildflower patch by the lower brook may be playing a small part in this – it had a fine showing of creeping thistles, which attracted flocks of goldfinches in August. The thistles have now been cleared for the winter. To find out more about goldfinches visit <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-34703580>

Children's play area

One of the climbing frames in the upper children's play area has been repaired and is now back in use, but a second one is still fenced off due to concerns about rotting timbers. We hope it too will be fixed or replaced in the near future.

New members help us hit new high

FOWP had a stall at the Southfields Harvest event at St Barnabas Church in September, where we chatted with people about our work and had maps and other information on display. If you came to say hello, then thank you! We had lots of interesting conversations and signed up six new members, taking FOWP membership to a new high of 166.

FOWP Committee becomes FOWP Forum

At our last meeting, we voted to change the name of our main committee to FOWP Forum.



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Wimbledon Park Safer Neighbourhood Team

As we edge nearer towards winter we see a seasonal change in the demands made on the Police and other public services. I am happy to report that Merton is one of the safest Boroughs in London. Wimbledon Park has one of the lowest crime rates in the Borough. Having said that, I think it is important to point out to everyone to be aware of their surroundings as the days get shorter. On the 26th October at around 22:50hrs a lone female was followed home by an unknown male. Two days later at around the same time the same male appeared at the female's living room window. In the early hours of the 5th November it is thought that the male tried to break into the female's property in Wimbledon Park. An image of the suspect male has been captured on CCTV and forms part of this news letter (see page 36) and has also been released to the press.

During the darker evenings we also traditionally see a rise in the number of motor vehicle crimes across London. Wimbledon Park is no exception and has sadly seen a significant rise in theft from motor vehicles over the last couple of months. Please always remember to lock your vehicle at all times of the day and night and take out any valuable items from your car or hide them from view.

I am also pleased to report that a suspect that was caught on CCTV in July stealing a charity box from Christ the King Catholic Church, Arthur Road has been arrested and charged with the offence. He was eventually caught through forensic evidence after he left his fingerprints at the scene.

In October we seized a large amount of class A drugs and cash from an address in the Gap Road, Plough Lane area of the ward. Enquiries are still underway to try and catch the person/s responsible and I hope to be able to report some positive news when I write to you again in the next addition of this news letter.

We are keen to meet as many people who either live or work on the ward and hold open Police surgeries every month. Over the next few months these informal meetings will be held at the Cup and Saucer Café, Arthur Road, Wimbledon. We also hold bike marking/registering events on Saturday afternoons throughout the year at the Police Base in Wimbledon Park. Dates are shown below.

Contd on page 36

New WPRA Committee Members needed!

It is a long time since we had any new committee members. Are you interested in the local community? Would you be prepared to spend a few hours a month supporting the Association?

In particular we need people to fill the following posts:

Membership Secretary

Minutes Secretary

Sub Editor for the newsletter

If you are interested in any of these posts, give me a call.

Iain Simpson: 07836 361 782



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In addition to Police surgeries we hold Police ward panel meetings four times a year. This is a voluntary role and involves meeting and working with your local Police to enable residents to choose what they would like their local Police to concentrate on. Our priorities at the moment are burglary, motor vehicle crime and anti-social behaviour. The role of ward panel members suits people of all ages and from all walks of life and would be a great addition to any CV. If interested please email Paul.Roberts6@met.Police.pnn.uk or call 0208 7212452.



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Wandle Valley Forum

The Wandle Valley Forum Website

The Wandle Valley Forum website has been developed and the domain name is: www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk. This gives details of the Forum and its activities and the 80 community groups, voluntary organisations and businesses who back the Forum which include Wimbledon Park Residents' Association and Friends of Wimbledon Park.

Current Priorities

The current priorities of the Forum, especially those that affect Wimbledon Park residents, include:-

- Maintain, improve and complete the Wandle Trail along the full length of the river - including by closing gaps in the Wandle trail at Earlsfield and the Wandle Delta.
- Raise awareness and improve management of the Wandle's diverse cultural and industrial heritage, including its mills and landmark historic sites.
- Encourage use of the Wandle Valley for healthy outdoor activity, community volunteering and public events.
- Secure fair funding for the Wandle Valley Regional Park from its four constituent London Boroughs of Wandsworth, Merton, Sutton and Croydon and by campaigning for a review of the Lee Valley precept.


Closing the 'Earlsfield' Gap

The re-development of the Haslemere Industrial Estate could provide monies from the Community Infrastructure Levy to be used to assist with the provision of a new route for the Wandle Trail from the Trewint Street Bridge under the railway line to connect with the Estate site and through to Ravensbury Terrace. *(NOTE: Also being proposed is the connection of Durnsford Recreation Ground directly to the Wandle Trail from the bottom end of the Rec. However the author of this article does not support this proposal as it would almost certainly open up the Rec to cyclists – causing the same problems currently met by pedestrians in the Park. Closing the 'Gap' as described above should be more than adequate to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists to the Wandle Trail).*

National Park City

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Ivan Scott ivan104@btinternet.com



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Kathy Blackburn	51 Ryfold Road	SW19 8DF
Spike Clarke	30 Home Park Road	SW19
Beate Eberhardt	17 Crescent Gardens	SW19 8AJ
DeNica Fairman - Membership Secretary	3 Strathmore Road	SW 19 8DB
Pamela Hunt - Advertising	1 Brooklands Ave	SW19 8EP
Nigel Israel	14 Ryfold Road	SW19 8BZ
Paresh Modasia	124 Arthur Road	SW19 8AA
Michael Moore - Horticulture	344 Durnsford Road	SW19 8DX
Elaine Sandon	90 Ashen Grove	SW19 8BN
Michael Tyler - Planning	Cromwell Road	SW19
Iain Simpson - Chairman & Newsletter Editor	56 Home Park Road	SW19 7HN
Peter West - Planning	33 Cromwell Road	SW19
Cllr Janice Howard, ex officio	Dora Road	SW19
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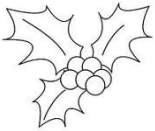


**Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a
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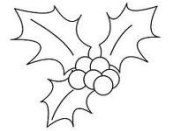
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