

Wimbledon Community Forum 28 September 2017 Chair's Report

The meeting was held at the Wimbledon Arts Space, and chaired by Councillor Najeeb Latif as Councillor James Holmes was unable to attend. Approximately 40 residents attended, as well as seven other Merton Councillors. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing the councillors present at the meeting.

Soapbox

Nell Allen provided an update on the No to Wheelies Campaign. A petition with more than 1100 signatures has been submitted to the council but signatures are still being collected. The proposed alternative to fortnightly collection involves using newly designed bell-orb bins collected through a slave bins method. In response to questions Nell said that there was need to separate paper/card from glass and plastics collections due to contamination issues. Other residents raised issues about the space for storing wheelie bins, the clutter on the pavement and the lack of consultation.

A resident also asked if the future of Wimbledon police station could be discussed at a future meeting.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Alambritis

Councillor Alambritis gave a presentation on the challenges the council faces, recent achievements and the vision for 2020. The presentation can be found at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/council-and-local-democracy/community-forums/wimbledon-community-forum>

In response to questions Councillor Alambritis said that the residents survey had used a standard random sampling approach which meant we could be confident the results we representative of the wider population of the borough. The investigation into the council tax consultation showed that although there was an error in using the council reply address there was nothing inappropriate about contacting residents directly. Councillor Alambritis said he made no apology for reaching out to residents in the poorer parts of the borough as they are underrepresented in responses to Council consultations.

In response to a question about Cannizaro Park Councillor Alambritis said that the Council's client teams monitor the performance of idverde but he would be happy to go and have a look if there are particular problems there. In response to the wheelie bin issue Councillor Alambritis said that it was common across the country for councils to move to wheelie bins and fortnightly collection due to improved efficiency and increasing recycling rates.

A large number of questions and points were made in relation to Merton Hall and the decision of the Planning Applications Committee on 21 September. These are set out below with the response from Councillor Alambritis.

Point raised	Response
The availability of Merton Hall would have meant respondents to the High Path consultation would not have registered a need for more community space. Elim Church could have gone to St Georges instead of Merton Hall	Merton Council has a statutory duty to meet demand for school places and research has shown the need for a new secondary school was in South Wimbledon. In order to achieve this, the Council needed to agree a land swap with Elim Church and Merton Hall was the most appropriate location. Elim Church will continue to make the hall available to hire to the local community.
More than £3m is being spent on the new site for Elim Church, what valuations have been done to ensure this is value to tax payers	There are systems in place to check value for money and the Council is subject to audit on its spending.
The current attractive hall will be replaced with a windowless box with extra facilities compared to the current Elim Church site.	The planning application was approved by the independent Planning Committee
Elim Church teaches that homosexuality is wrong and will therefore not be inclusive landlords of a community facility	Elim Church is welcoming to all, as shown by its hosting of the Wimbledon Foodbank
There is land available for a new school in Mitcham and that is where demand is.	A full report on the research carried out should the demand was in South Wimbledon.
Was a new school a pledge in the 2014 election and if so why leave it to the last minute?	There was a pledge to meet demand for places. Opening a new school is complicated by the requirement to find an Academy or Free School host and work with the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
Why is the land for the school is being paid for by Merton and not the EFA	The project is a partnership between the Council, EFA and Harris Federation. The EFA are contributing a considerable sum.

Wimbledon Masterplan

Paul McGarry, Head of Future Merton, provided an update on the work towards a Masterplan for Wimbledon. Following the workshops in February the team has been analysing the responses and will be producing a final report shortly. This will be available from <http://www2.merton.gov.uk/environment/regeneration/futurewimbledon.htm>.

Work has begun on a first draft of the Masterplan that will set out the detail for developers and encourage them to be more ambitious. The draft is due to be considered by Cabinet in December 2017 and then be consulted on in January and February. Paul invited suggestions for what should be included in the consultation.

Residents suggested that digital tools should be used to engage with young people, activities should take place on the street or at the piazza and that any future workshops should not try to cover as much material. Paul thanked residents for these ideas.

In relation to Crossrail 2 Paul said that we are still waiting for TfL and the government to approve the next phase of consultation and this is likely to happen in early 2018. In the

meantime the new rail franchise holder, South Western Railway has a commitment to invest in Wimbledon station. This is likely to focus on improving the retail offer and reducing congestion. They hope to work with SWR to ensure any works would not clash with Crossrail 2 plans.

When asked about Morden regeneration Paul explained that this was a big project which takes time to make progress on. The original plan was for a developer led project but that failed due to the financial downturn in 2009. Now the Council is working with TfL, who are the other substantive landowner, to pool land and seek a development partner. Together we will draw up a Masterplan over the next 18 months.

Updates available at www.merton.gov.uk/moremorden

Report it function

Claire Walshe, Neighbourhood Client Officer, from Merton Council provided a demonstration of the Council's online Report it function, used to report street scene issues to the Council. Claire said that it was important to use the tool, or the call centre, whenever possible to ensure that the right information gets to the right team as soon as possible. Reporting through other methods means duplicating work and may slow down the response as a result. In addition reporting via the website makes it easier to monitor performance.

In response to questions Claire said that the site will be updated to allow photos to be attached soon and she would raise with the Web Team the idea that acknowledgements could include the target timescales for a response. Claire said her team is aware there have been teething problems with the new contractor and they are constantly gathering evidence about their performance for later discussions. Reporting multiple sites does require multiple entries but you should not have to input your personal details each time. Claire said there is a clear programme of works and set of standards for road cleaning and this could be communicated to residents. It was agreed to bring this to a future meeting.

Claire also said that education and enforcement were also key tools in combatting litter and would be continuing.

Close of meeting

Councillor Latif thanked residents for attending and closed the meeting.

Date of future meetings:

Tuesday 5 December 2017 at Wimbledon Methodist Church
Thursday 1 March 2018 at Wimbledon Arts Space

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