

Friends of Wimbledon Park (F O W P) Forum meeting minutes Tuesday 18th JANUARY 2022

(version c, 7 February 2022)

Attendees (on zoom):

Martin Sumpton (FOWP Deputy Chair, Chaired this meeting)
Charles Runcie (FOWP EC, SGRA Chair, Zoom host for this meeting)
Tony Borkowski (FOWP EC, Wimbledon Park Angling Club)
Rob Kennedy (FOWP EC, Membership Secretary)
Beth McKillop (FOWP EC)
Amelia Obertelli-Moriarty (FOWP EC)
Rev Ian Tattum (FOWP EC)
Christopher Coombe
Leoni Cooper AM (London Assembly Member, Merton & Wandsworth)
Dr. Dave Dawson
Cllr. Ed Gretton
Cllr. Oonagh Moulton
Linda Murgatroyd
Johnny Perkins (AELTC)
Bill Wiffen
(Nick Steiner - FOWP Chairman - joined for the last 5 minutes)

Thanks to Charles Runcie for hosting the meeting.

Apologies were received from Fleur Anderson M P. And from Nick Steiner

A quorum for the meeting was achieved.

Previous forum minutes were taken as read and agreed.

The Chair's report was attached to the meeting agenda but not discussed in detail due to running out of time, so the report was not formally endorsed on this occasion.

MATTERS ARISING

The use of glyphosate * in the Park was raised by Linda [* a weed-killer which has been commonly used e.g. 'Round-Up' and which is harmful to animals] id Verde and Merton to advise on its use and limited application).

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Dam safety project – it was noted that Heras fencing has been installed by the Contractors in and around Ashen Grove Wood within the Park and Golf Club to safely isolate the outfall area from the lake. The level of the lake has been reduced by at least 12 inches by removing the boards on the sluice; this has resulted in a substantial increase in the discharge via the brook through the Park and Dave has noticed the brook flowing faster and higher. Also, the golf club (Professional and Assistant Manager) reported that within 2 – 3 days the areas of the 17th Hole beside the lake have been much improved under-foot and the waterlogging usually prevalent at this time of year has been greatly reduced. It seems that the original drains are now working again.

Although Merton has a webpage about its Dam restoration Project it would be appreciated if Merton could place a Gantt Chart (flow chart) in the Noticeboards so that the public can more readily understand what work is to be done and when? [Ed to advise].

And will Merton inform us about the level of the lake (height) to be restored? And when?

AELTCC Planning Application for its development of Wimbledon Park - this was discussed for most of the meeting. Points were raised as follows :-

1. There is uncertainty about the timeline for the planning decision in both Wandsworth and Merton or, indeed, whether Merton should consider the Wandsworth B C decision? In any event the local authority elections will be held in May so a June / Summer decision would probably be the earliest to expect. Further comments or objections are still invited in the meantime.
2. Dave spoke about the proposals relating to soils and ‘re-landscaping’ proposals. The 18th Century landscape does not require acid soils for its grassland (meadows) and neutral soils (pH ca. 7) would be better.
3. The report upon fish was ‘good’ and referred to the establishment of the European Eel in the lake.
4. Dave said that the decline in wildlife was a key point to judge the planning application on its merit. The Wimbledon Society’s newsletter highlights the adverse effects of the plans upon Biodiversity and Trees. Jane Plant (Tree Warden : Merton) was quoted by Dave : she said that *the replacement of ‘middle aged trees’ with saplings would result in a net loss of trees.*
5. Will Merton B C enforce the Deed of Covenant agreed upon the sale of the golf course Freehold in 1993?

When golf ceases to be played (1st January 2023) the lakeshore land coloured green on the plan attached to the Land Registry Title Deeds is to be fenced-off (as described) and returned to Merton as a public access / footpath. The golf course land is Metropolitan Open Land protected by legislation — a site of Grade II* Listing of National and Special Historic Importance – and a Conservation Area including wildlife habitat Sites of Grade 1 Importance for Nature Conservation – The T & C Planning Act 1990 etc which are to protect the site from any development as agreed by AELTCC and Merton BC at the time of the sale.

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6. Rob asked if Merton BC Officer John Bosley had been in discussion with AELTCC about this? Ed stated that *no officer (Merton) can agree with AELTCC but can only give them guidance*. Oonagh confirmed that Merton's officers had been in discussions with AELTCC.

7. Leonie pointed out that the GLA planning officers were engaged with AELTCC and were concerned about 'Wilding Principles'. AELTCC were hoping for a decision by early Summer 2022 and that detailed discussions were going on behind the scenes. At any planning meeting open to the public there would be a restriction on the number of speakers.

Revelstoke Road entrance project

Leonie said that she had met Nick on site and that discussions with T f L had been arduous (!) Merton now must endorse the project.

W P volunteers – tree saplings have been ordered and it is hoped to plant these in the Park at the beginning of March 2022.

Events - Rob reported that the 'Pub in the Park' application would require the granting of an alcohol Licence. A large area of The Field would require fencing-off to accommodate the installation for operation from Friday to Sunday. Noise from this event would be an issue with the residents

Yet again, and it bears repeating, complaints were raised about the regular damage caused to the grassland by events held in the Park. Of course, this leaves an eyesore and there's a lack of any enforcement by Merton to repair and reinstate the areas subject to damage. Whether it's Pines and Needles – Wimbledon Fortnight car parking - the Fun Fare etc these leave a trail of damage and there is a rutted and often unsafe surface – where once football and cricket were played, and with the surfaces maintained in good order.

WC's in the Park by the café

– Amelia told us how wonderful the new WC's were after their refurbishment. However, there was nowhere to store the loo rolls (seems to be a snagging item?) and that perhaps id Verde would resolve this?

Well Done to Amelia and Ed for their patience and perseverance!

ooOoo

Nick made a late appearance towards the end.

Charles said we had over-run our allotted zoom time.

Thanks again to everyone who attended – and do let me know if have missed anything.

Martin Sumpton, Deputy-Chair FOWP