

WIMBLEDON PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held at 7.30 pm. on Thursday 25th October, 2007
at St. Austin's Hall, Church of Christ the King, The Crescent

Present: Iain C. Simpson (Chairman)
Andrew Dalton (Treasurer)
Paresh Modasia
Judith Centofanti (Secretary)
Ken Ball
Michael Moore
Beate Erberhart
Stephen Kerin
Stephen Hammond MP

Apologies: Noel Ranken
Ex Officio: Cllrs. Tariq Ahmad, Oonagh Moulton, – not present

1. **Minutes of the AGM held on 25th October 2006.** The Minutes were approved by the Committee and approved by the AGM.
2. **Matters Arising:** No matters arising.
3. **Chairman's Report.**

The Chairman introduced the evening's sponsor Aaron Abraham, Investment Representative at Edward Jones, Stockbrokers and Financial Advisers.

Bernard Rondeau's book "History of Wimbledon Park" is available for £10 cost price, available at the Pharmacy and Home Office Estate Agents in Arthur Road.

The Chairman welcomed representatives from Sustainable Merton to the AGM as well as residents who have been active against the Proposed development in Haslemere – social housing project – Daisy Bird was leading the group raising concerns.

The campaign against the proposed Orange mobile phone mast, lead by Dernica Fairman and supported by Stephen Hammond appears to have been successful as no mast has appeared – part of the campaign was a petition which collected 2000 signatures.

The Ravindran appeal was relaunched in September and £26K has been raised in total, to date.

The Safer Neighbourhood Appeal Borough-wide has been launched which will result in more police visible locally – Sir John Wheeler will speak later about this.

A new Paddling Pool was opened in Wimbledon Park. This initiative by the Wimbledon Park Heritage group was led by Sim Comfort. Also in the park are new gates. The group are to be congratulated as our park has been greatly improved by their efforts.

Wimbledon Park Hall – 3 consultation meeting held at the end of last year resulted in an amended design. CADAC looked at design of the hall which was approved in April. Discussions with architect established a steering group and talked to Council re. interior design. Progress remarkably slow and it is very difficult to find out why this is. Brian Fraser, Senior Officer in charge of project within the Council thought project was on course and legal representatives of both parties were exchanging documents. The Council says it will deal with within this financial year. Chairman expressed his concerns. Difficult to find anybody who is responsible for a project in Merton Council.

Newsletters go out 3 times a year. We receive positive feedback. The success is due to Noel Rankin for all his hard work on advertising which has led to a profit in the accounts.

Clive France was also thanked for the website. As he's in Southfields, we may need to find someone to run it.

Particular thanks go to Michael Moore for the flower boxes in Arthur Road and to the All England Club for the hanging baskets.

Chairman thanked the Committee for their hard work and support.

4. Treasurer's Report

The Newsletter has generated a healthy profit of £1400 due to lower costs of print and advertising revenue. The WPRA has reserves £9,000.

No questions asked.

Proposed Rosemary Connell. Seconded Tom Riddell.

5. Subscriptions

Proposal to make changes to the WPRA subscriptions:

1 year @ £5 (increase from £3)

3 years @ £12 (increase from £9)

Do away with Life Membership but existing Life Members remain

Leaflet detailing new subscription rates and designed by DeNica Fairman, Membership Secretary discussed.

Q. Life members will be exempt?. A. Yes, but no new.

Q. How many members. A. 400. Felt this is not a good way of raising revenue.

A. Chairman said will do both; from spring to summer there will be a campaign to increase membership which was very good value for money i.e. 3 newsletters, good local representation which takes more interest in the local area than Merton Council.

Q. Should leaflet go to non-members only? A. Very difficult logistically.

Q. Just send leaflet in newsletter. A. The newsletter needs to go to everybody to target new members.

Q. Is the free distribution of the newsletter killing the incentive to join.

A. It was better to deliver to all. The newsletter was an excellent way to inform residents of what's happening and get them involved.

John Slater agreed. Distribute newsletter widely then, when you call households for subscriptions, the newsletter is the introduction. Support distribution to everybody and building of a war chest for project in the hall.

Andrew – felt making a profit on the newsletter may mean advertisers would be less interested.

Paresh – numbers need to go up to 1000, in support of increase.

Gill – no one knows when subs due. Chairman A. This will change as we now have spread sheets.

Patricia: asked about DD. Andrew said this was available

It was also mentioned that paying subscriptions by PayPal on website is possible.

Q. What do you get from membership? A. Paresh said it gives you a sense of belonging in the community and informs you of the work of the Committee in support of the neighbourhood and it is vital to get people to join.

Proposed Michael Taylor. Seconded Gill Farmer

Carried unanimously.

6. **Sir John Wheeler**

Began by praising Iain and committee for the work they do, particularly on planning. Thanked Steve Hammond MP for his support.

Safer Neighbourhoods. Everywhere in London now has a dedicated Safer Neighbourhood team.

Steve Walker – Acting Sergeant Dave Beasley + 2 Community Support Officers are very active in looking after Wimbledon Park, which is a very busy ward with many people coming to the area. Their priorities include a reduction of graffiti, a reduction of youth anti social behaviour and reduction of crime by visibility of the team. Their office in the Park was restored by Metropolitan Police and houses Wimbledon Village team and Wimbledon Park team. They do want to hear if you have any concerns.

Crime – from reported crime figures in this Ward, it is lowest in London. Most crime is opportunistic rather than burglary etc. Q. do you feel safer with the new police presence. If you do, this is the most important thing of all. They are very keen to find out what people think. The results of a survey of 21 businesses in Arthur Road was that they felt pretty safe – want to see less litter, less graffiti and improved road markings. Lots of opportunistic crime in Plough Lane and 2000 more people are moving into the area with the development in Plough Lane which will increase demand on services and police..

Other successes: arrest of a known drug dealer, pleaded guilty.

The Chief Constable of British Transport Police sees graffiti as a major priority and that CCTV on the underground is helping with robberies on the underground which is at centre of our community.

It was mentioned that whilst the panel are trying to persuade Merton to take local interests seriously no Ward Councillors were present at this and another residents' association AGMs.

There was a request to get rid of the newspaper stands outside the underground station, also that the cycle rack should be moved to improve access to the station. Steve Hammond MP was asked to help with this as the Councillors not present.

Since 1991 there have been 7,000 bomb threats to London Underground stations. Litter bins installations provide an opportunity for crime and bombs. As they tighten up in London so crime goes out to suburbs.

The Safer Neighbourhood team is there to provide a real presence for safety and security. Want to hear from you; i.e. intelligence – need to get LB Merton to pay more attention to residents.

Q. Ken Ball - every Sat/Sun morning goes round with his children and picks up bottles of beer and cans in Arthur Road. If remove bins where do we put it. How do we persuade people not to do it and where do we put rubbish?

A. Council should provide litter bins and they should be emptied according to need.

Q. Petra Flemming – why are our Councillors not here and why Council not paying attention?

A. Stephen Hammond – local Councillors do have other jobs and use their free time to work for the council. They do get paid a small amount of £7.5K. That is the current Council system.

Discussion on structure of local Government. Stephen expressed his view that councils should devolve money down to residents association level. (What is local Government? How do we fund it?)

Q. Rain – drains not cleaned after floods. A. Stephen is liaising with Thames Water, this has nothing to do with Merton Council.

7. Stephen Hammond

Began by praising the real sense of community. There are 51 resident associations in Wimbledon, they are very important community bodies. Praised the Orange campaign which was a tremendous community action, Sim Comfort and the Wimbledon Park Heritage Group, the Ravindran appeal, the Safer Neighbourhood scheme which has been one of the great incentives during the last 18 months. It was very noticeable to Stephen that these teams are making a huge impression on peoples' perception of the level of criminal activity.

Wanted to raise the issues of planning, mobile phone, transport and streets

Planning – Haslemere Road development is a major issue and he is giving advice. Morrisons' planning a massive over development. There are four to five major sites in Wimbledon town centre coming up for development. It is very important that local people get involved to ensure developments of excellence and what local communities wants.

Mobile Phone Masts – the issue of the Orange mast in Arthur Road is not dead and is ongoing. Stephen is to sponsor a Private Members Bill in the ballot. Phone masts need to be subject to full planning process which regard health issues.

Transport – met COO for Transport for London as very concerned about District Line. The Mayor of London is very interested in Cross Rail as Metronet being docked 5000 for failing and there is a £850 million hole in the Metronet contract. Wimbledon Park has not had its upgrade because of the Metronet costs which might effect Phase 2 of the station and signalling upgrade. He will be writing to COO as Phase 2 must deliver station upgrades and signalling upgrades. Scheduling on Wimbledon route also needs upgrading. He supports Sir John on newspaper bins and cycle racks.

Role as MP - he is one of the least expensive MPs, 510th out of 624 MPs. Sutton and South Merton PCT are a poor performing PCT and are failing to bring better healthcare closer to home. He will be supporting the local GP practice with problems they are having with the PCT.

There are a number of environmental issues such as street cleaning in Wimbledon town centre and Wimbledon Village with Saturday night problems extending to Wimbledon Park. He will be taking these issues and those raised by Sir John to his next meeting with the Council.

There is a scurrilous and defamatory leaflet circulating saying that he will end the freedom pass. This is not true, he will continue to support this and fund this.

Q. Mary – regarding fear of radiation from phone masts, the radiation from the use of computer wireless systems is higher than that issued from mobile phone mast. It is important to be aware.

Q. Michael – Is there going to be an increase in capacity on the District Line by adding another carriage.

A. They have to get it right. Extra carriage is due in Phase 2.

Q. Does COO use tube?

A. Stephen – he says it is 28 minutes to St. James

Q. Lifts installed?

A. Stephen – plan to install lifts in Southfield tube in 2010. In Olympic Plan Wimbledon Park is a key entrance to the area but no lift is planned in Wimbledon Park. Need to have a lift in Wimbledon for Olympics.

Chairman thanked Sir John and Stephen Hammond and that it was very interesting to hear from Sir John and Stephen about what is going on. This type of communication is very important and they had raised some serious issues this evening. We are very lucky to have an MP who lives in the area, takes an interest in the area and in the position he is in he can effect some benefit to the community. The Chairman suggested we have more meetings of public interest. There are so many important issues including planning.

8. Election of Officers

It was noted that Pat Gomez was missing from the list of officers
DeNica Fairman is an officer and is now Membership Secretary
Proposed to include the position of Vice Chairman. Need to approve the office and leave it to the committee to appoint during the year.

Re-election of Committee
Proposed by Tom Riddle, Seconded John Slater.

Andrew asked anyone to volunteer as plenty of opportunities to serve.

9. AOB

Praise for Michael Moore for his work with the flower boxes on Arthur Road

Thanks to Chairman for his support of the campaign against the development in Haslemere Road which would increase the number of housing occupancy from 12 to 73 social housing developments although Merton has described it as affordable housing.

Q. Original plans were for social housing, now described as affordable housing. What is the difference? A. Someone from the audience explained that it was all rented property.

Q. What are the plans for Wimbledon Hall? A. Chairman explained it will be a new hall community centre on ground floor and 4 floors of flats above.

Q. About money raised by Association. A. The Council will be leasing the ground floor to residents association – we will form a company limited by guarantee and will run the facility on a profitable basis. Council is providing the capital and association will be responsible for running it.