

Wimbledon Common West Residents' Association (WCWRA)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at the Hotel du Vin on Tuesday 10th June at 19.45

1. Introduction from Andrew Durant, co-chair

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked the Hotel du Vin and Robert Holmes for their continued support and his fellow committee members for their contribution to the WCWRA. He also thanked Michael and Anna Hatchard, previous co-chair and secretary respectively, for their hard work and commitment to the Association. Michael and Anna are away travelling for a period and have therefore resigned their posts but are hoping to rejoin on their return. The chair also thanked Emma Hoskins, a former West Place resident, who is our website developer. She supports Colin Price who does an excellent job of managing the website. Emma provides this service at well below market rate.

2. Minutes from the AGM on 4th June 2024

The chair briefly ran through the minutes from the last AGM on 4th June 2024. Key issues that were still current included:

A. Potholes

These continue to be a problem in the whole council area. We had invited Max Austin, Councillor to the AGM to answer any relevant questions but, unfortunately, he could not attend. We have been advised that it is best to report any potholes to the council via the 'fixmystreet' website.

<https://fixmystreet.merton.gov.uk>

B. Pathways across the Common

Potholes and waterlogging on the footpaths that cross the common on the way to the village are still a problem.

The chair invited Colin Cooper, chief executive, Wimbledon & Putney Commons, to comment on the funding situation for repairs and maintenance. Colin said that unfortunately there are not enough funds to tackle this pathway as there are other priorities. It was suggested that the WCWRA could get involved in a fundraising

campaign but over £50,000 would need to be raised which would be a mammoth task.

Action: To monitor the state of the path in bad weather and reassess whether a fundraising campaign could be mounted. To be discussed at the next AGM.

C. Long grass opposite West Place

At the last AGM it was brought to the attention of Colin Cooper that, because of 'No Mow May', the sight lines at the corner of West Place and the Causeway were restricted, causing a safety hazard. Many thanks to Colin and his team who quickly remedied the situation.

Action: WCWRA to monitor sight lines this year and liaise with Commons Maintenance if they are restricted again.

D. Friends of Fishpond Wood

At the last AGM, David Jenkins drew the members' attention to Fishpond Wood. Adjacent to Warren Farm, Fishpond Wood features wetlands surrounded by old oak-hazel woodland. The ponds support a wide variety of life such as frogs, toads, newts and dragonflies. It is owned and managed by Merton Council but needs additional funding and care, particularly the repair of the boardwalk which allows access to view the flora and fauna. We are delighted to report that enough funds have been raised to start initial repair work. It was interesting to note that part of the fundraising came from a notice board with a QR code to donate. Perhaps this could be an approach to adopt if we embark on a fundraising campaign for the pathway across the common?

E. Social event

A very successful social event was held on 5th February 2025 at the Wimbledon Common Golf Club. We had 45 residents attending, 7 of which were new members. A big thank you to the Golf Club for hosting and for providing a delicious buffet at their own expense.

Louise Charlton proposed that the draft minutes should be accepted. This was seconded by Clive Hilton. Unanimously approved.

3. Treasurer's report

Gino Coquis, the treasurer, presented the treasurer's report for year ending 31st December 2024. Funds that were brought forward were £5,688. Income was £693 whilst expenditure was £381. This means a net surplus of £312 resulting in total funds being held of £6000. The full accounts are available on our website.

Struan Robertson proposed the acceptance of the report and accounts which was seconded by Louise Charlton. Unanimously approved.

4. Election of committee members

As the chair has mentioned in his introduction, Michael Hatchard (co-chair) and Anna Hatchard (committee member) have resigned. Therefore, the committee to be re-elected consists of:

Andrew Durant (co-chair), Emma Pope (co-chair), Nicola Straker (secretary), Gino Coquis (treasurer/membership), Colin Price, Robert Holmes, Carol Andrews, Anne Peacock and Anna Demetriades – committee members.

Acceptance of the election of the new committee was proposed by John Rink. It was seconded by Louise Charlton. The election or appointment of each proposed committee member and each specific office appointment was unanimously approved.

5. Local issues

A. Rubbish management

There is an increasing amount of rubbish at the bins on the Causeway/West Place junction as well as further down Camp Road, as illustrated by the pictures shown at the AGM. This is particularly bad at weekends. It is the responsibility of Merton Council to empty these bins. Various suggestions included two bins, signage to ask people to take rubbish home if bins are full etc. Since a council representative was not present it was difficult to decide a course of action at the AGM. Anne Peacock, who is also a member of Friends of Cannizaro Park, said that her team have a contact in rubbish management team at the Council who can be called upon when street rubbish gets out of hand. She will provide this. Equally, all residents can notify the council if there is excess rubbish by alerting them on:

<https://fixmystreet.merton.gov.uk>

Action: WCWRA to approach our council representatives/contact of Anne Peacock to find a way forward.

B. Fly-tipping

As well as the proliferation of rubbish, fly-tipping has become an increasing problem, whether it is on the Causeway, Westside Common or along Sunset/Camp Road. Again, contacting the council via 'Fix my street' helps clear the mess but more effective CCTV, with cameras that give a quality image, is needed if the perpetrators are going to be identified. The Wimbledon Common Golf Club is having better CCTV fitted with the support of the Commons.

Action: Keep in touch with the Golf Club to see if CCTV is effective either as a deterrent or an aid to enforcement.

C. Business in Wimbledon Village

Concern has been raised about several businesses that have closed in the Village and how to keep it as a thriving economic and social hub. Clive Hilton, chair of the Wimbledon Union of Resident Associations (WURA), explained that the Wimbledon Village Business Association is encouraging events in the Village such as the Sunday Market and VE day celebrations and is hoping to revive a smaller version of the Wimbledon Village Fair which was held by Rushmere Pond every year. Whilst these cannot combat fully the effect of high rents and business rates, their aim is to increase footfall to the Village and encourage visitors from outside the area.

D. AELTC development

Clive Hilton is also a key player in the 'Save Wimbledon Park!' campaign. They want the All England Lawn Tennis Club to reconsider their development on the former Wimbledon Park Golf Club as it is legally protected and designated Metropolitan Open Land and the development they believe is on an industrial scale, including 38 tennis courts and an 8000 seater stadium. The campaign is in the process of raising funds to challenge the Greater London Authority's decision to grant planning permission and the High Court have agreed to conduct a Judicial Review on the 8th and 9th July 2025. If anyone would like to donate to these funds you can do so by using: <https://www.crowdjustice.com/case/save-wimbledon-park/>

6. Guest Speaker – Mr Paul Kohler, MP for Wimbledon

Paul Kohler, Merton councillor and now Wimbledon MP, joined the meeting to give an overview of some of the local issues he has been involved in:

A. 'Save Wimbledon Park'

He is a leading voice in the 'Save the Wimbledon Park' campaign and outspoken about what he sees as the failure of local democratic processes. He has consistently emphasised the legal obligations attached to the land, arguing that the site is bound by both restrictive covenants and statutory trust arrangements. Paul has challenged Debbie Jevans, chair, AELTC, to meet with the 'Save Wimbledon Park' group. She has agreed and even if the development cannot be overturned there is hope that a compromise could be reached in terms of its scale and disruption.

B. Wimbledon Police Station

Since 2017, Paul has been fighting to prevent the closure of Wimbledon Police Station and to move all services to Mitcham Police Station. Whilst Paul is actively working with the council and lobbying the home office, you can still sign a petition to keep it open.

<https://www.mertonlibdems.org.uk/our-campaigns/save-wimbledon-police-station>

C. Morden Centre Regeneration

Merton Council has failed to deliver on regeneration commitments for Morden Town Centre and in February plans have been pushed back until 2028. On 3rd March 2025, Paul spoke in Parliament about this failure and subsequently has secured a meeting with the Housing Minister, Alex Norris, to discuss what has gone wrong and what support the Government can give. Amongst the improvements Merton Council has promised were tackling poor air quality, reducing traffic dominance, and enabling a better setting for retail and businesses.

7. Any other business

Residents attending the AGM had the difficult task of selecting their favourite image from the stunning entries to our photography competition. It was a close contest, but the top spot went to Emma Pope with a beautiful photo of Wimbledon Common Golfers beginning their round on a wintry morning. All the entries can be viewed on our website.