

Wimbledon Common West Residents' Association (WCWRA)

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held at the Hotel du Vin on Tuesday 9th June 2026 at 19.30

1. Introduction from Emma Pope, chair

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Hotel du Vin for its continued support, as well as her fellow committee members for their ongoing commitment and contributions to the WCWRA.

She also expressed her sincere appreciation to Andrew Durant, the Association's former co-chair and secretary, for his dedicated service over the past 25 years. His tireless commitment, leadership, and hard work have played a pivotal role in ensuring the continued success, relevance, and longevity of the WCWRA.

The chair also thanked former West Place resident Emma Hosking, our website developer, for her continued support of Colin Price, who manages the website. Emma provides her services at a significantly reduced rate.

Finally, the chair welcomed the guest speakers: the local neighbourhood policing team—PCSO Jason Coelho, PC Matthew Deacons and PC Charlie Howes; Colin Cooper, CEO, WPCC, Councillors Max Austin and Will Orson (Village Ward, Merton Council); Paul Kohler MP (Wimbledon) and his parliamentary assistant, Ursula Faulkner; Sharon Maher, headteacher and Annamarie Vergunst, director of operations, the Study School. She also welcomed new member Rosie Caley, chair of Dons Local Action Group, who would provide an overview of the group's work and opportunities for volunteering.

2. Minutes from the AGM on 10th June 2025

The chair briefly ran through the minutes from the last AGM on 10th June 2025. There were several items that would be discussed further under 'local issues'.

Andrew Durant proposed that the draft minutes should be accepted. This was seconded by David Jenkins. Unanimously approved.

3. Treasurer's report

Gino Coquis, the treasurer, presented the treasurer's report for year ending 31st December 2025. Funds that were brought forward were £6235. Income was £693 whilst expenditure was £1378. This means a net shortfall of £735 resulting in total funds being held of £5504. The shortfall was mainly

due to an additional social event held in February 2025. The full accounts are available on our website.

Clive Hilton proposed the acceptance of the report and accounts which was seconded by Margaret Murray. Unanimously approved.

4. Election of committee members

As noted by the chair in her opening remarks, Andrew Durant (co-chair) has resigned from the committee.

Barry Jones has applied to join the committee and was proposed for election as a committee member.

The following committee members were therefore presented for election/re-election:

- Emma Pope – Chair
- Nicola Straker – Secretary
- Gino Coquis – Treasurer/Membership Secretary
- Colin Price – Committee Member
- Robert Holmes – Committee Member
- Carol Andrews – Committee Member
- Anne Peacock – Committee Member
- Anna Demetriades – Committee Member
- Barry Jones – Committee Member

Acceptance of the election of the new committee was proposed by Andrew Durant. It was seconded by Margaret Murray. The election or appointment of each proposed committee member and each specific office appointment was unanimously approved.

5. Social Event

On 29th April 2026, the WCWRA held a very successful social get together at the Fox & Grapes Pub, with 60 of our existing and new members being welcomed. Music was provided by local resident musician, Ron Thomas, and delicious canapes from the Fox & Grapes. Our thanks go to both for such a lovely evening. This event was funded by a filming donation of £5000 made to the WCWRA by Lively Productions on behalf of Netflix for night filming in North View. NS suggested to the room that as the social events are so enjoyed and provide a sense of community that we continue to use the donation to fund future events and there was general agreement.

6. Local issues

Crime Prevention and Security

The safer neighbourhood police team reported that most of the crime in the ward centred on:

- Antisocial behaviour
- Violence against Women and Girls
- Vehicle theft
- Retail theft – particularly in the Village High Street

They have increased their patrols and offer a range of crime prevention advice through Met Engage. Please contact them through:

Village-Merton@contact.metengage.co.uk or you can meet them at one of the advertised events.

Rubbish management and fly-tipping

Rubbish management – following on from last year’s meeting, the bin on the Causeway/West Place junction which was managed by Merton Council and particularly bad at weekends, has been taken over by WPCC who have moved it on their land. Pictures taken on a Sunday at 5 pm have demonstrated a lack of rubbish around the bin area as the Common’s maintenance team empty it over the weekend. Colin Cooper asked whether the meeting considered the bin to be in the best place as this was a temporary solution and they wished to put a more permanent fixed bin in its stead. The meeting agreed that it was in the best position.

Paul Kohler, MP for Wimbledon, introduced the Wombles Community Charity, a national movement helping people across the UK take practical action to improve their local environment. Please view their website to find out more: www.thewomblescommunity.com

Fly-tipping

As well as the proliferation of rubbish, fly-tipping has become an increasing problem whether it is on the Causeway, the Windmill Road or Barham Road. Unfortunately, there is not enough CCTV and Colin Cooper stated that the one on the lamppost at the corner of the Causeway and West Place had been moved to Windmill Road by the Council. Improved permanent CCTV operation is essential for monitoring minor and serious incidents and improved co-operation between the Council and Police. It was felt that a more comprehensive and consistent approach to CCTV across Wimbledon would be a deterrent to fly-tipping and other security and anti-social behaviour issues.

Action: Find out how to replace the missing CCTV on the Causeway/West Place. Introduce the issue of CCTV with Wimbledon Union of Residents’ Associations and discuss a way forward.

The use of E-bikes, their parking, and bike racks

E-bike and dockless bike issues continue to cause antisocial behaviour and parking challenges. Colin Cooper reported that they are also causing considerable damage to the Golf Course.

Traffic and bike management have improved through the introduction of bike corrals, which have reduced the number of abandoned bikes. However, challenges remain during high-volume events such as the Wimbledon Championships.

Merton Council plans to temporarily deactivate bike corrals during the Championships to avoid overcrowding, although alternative parking solutions are still required.

Technology updates are being introduced to enforce parking regulations by charging users for incorrectly parked bikes. Concerns about shared bikes and community safety prompted calls for improved regulation and technology. Both Max Austin, Councillor for Village Ward, and Paul Kohler, MP for Wimbledon, highlighted the need for bike identifiers, similar to registration numbers, to

enable accurate reporting of violations. Forest Bikes indicated a willingness to implement bike identification, while Lime rejected the proposal, demonstrating differing levels of cooperation among operators. The current lack of third-party insurance for bike operators also remains a concern, with calls for councils to require mandatory insurance to help mitigate risk.

Bike rack for push bikes

Max Austin confirmed that the bike rack removed during the restoration and relocation of the Hanbury Fountain will be reinstated.

7. Developments on the Common: Colin Cooper, CEO, WPCC

Rough sleepers

Ursula Faulkner asked about rough sleepers on the Common and how they are managed. Colin explained that most are vulnerable individuals with mental health issues. He said they are well supported by Geoffrey George, Principal Co-ordinator of the Rough Sleeping Team at Merton Council, who works to find suitable accommodation for homeless people.

Springwell Car Park

Colin informed the meeting that Springwell Car Park will be temporarily closed to allow marked parking bays to be installed.

Management of flora

Colin then spoke about the management of the flora on the Common. There are approximately one million trees, creating a substantial natural seed stock. However, climate change is affecting the tree population, resulting in an increased incidence of limb drop. Only trees that pose a safety risk by overhanging paths are treated or removed. Trees within the woodland are generally left in place, as dead wood provides valuable habitat for wildlife. Surveys have shown that this approach has resulted in a tenfold increase in wildlife across the Common.

In response to a question about invasive species, Colin confirmed that Japanese Knotweed is present on the Common and is controlled by injecting the stems with herbicide.

Benches

A question was also raised about benches. Colin explained the policy on bench placement and maintenance, which aims to locate benches primarily along main pathways to improve accessibility while avoiding overcrowding. Benches in inappropriate locations are removed. The objective is to strike a balance between public enjoyment and preserving the natural character of the Common, rather than turning it into a heavily furnished park.

No additional benches will be installed, with the exception of Wilberforce Meadow, due to its association with the Study School.

Parkrun and other events

A question was asked about the impact of the weekly Saturday Parkrun, which attracts between 400 and 700 participants, and other organised running events.

These events can cause congestion, particularly parking issues, as many participants travel to the Common by car.

Parkrun is a charity with substantial financial reserves but does not make financial contributions towards the maintenance of the green spaces it uses.

The Commons management permits commercial running events only through a licensing process that balances public access with conservation. Event organisers are also required to provide facilities such as portable toilets, a requirement that does not currently apply to Parkrun.

Cross-country running originated on the Common, and local running clubs continue to be supported within sustainable limits.

The Commons are patrolled daily to ensure safety and cleanliness. Staff are on duty from 9.00 am to 5.00 pm, while keepers patrol from dawn until dusk on foot, by vehicle, or on horseback. Residents are encouraged to report any issues promptly to the Rangers' Office so that they can be dealt with as quickly as possible.

David Jenkins proposed a vote of thanks to Colin Cooper for his hard work and commitment to preserving this wonderful community asset. The proposal was unanimously supported by the meeting.

8. Developments in the Village: Max Austin, Councillor – Village Ward

Councillor Max Austin began by thanking the Residents' Association for its work in bringing the community together. He noted that Village Ward is Merton's largest ward, with 23 residents' associations. He stressed that most local issues fall within the Council's remit and encouraged residents to engage with their ward councillors for support.

Village infrastructure improvements

Max then described the work of **Visit Wimbledon Village**, whose aim is to develop new initiatives to increase footfall in the Village for the benefit of both residents and the local business community. Led by Max and Clive Hilton, Chair of the Wimbledon Union of Residents' Associations, the group successfully secured funding to improve the Village.

To date, the funding has been used for streetscape improvements and the relocation of the Hanbury Fountain. Circular benches, funded by the Village Business Association, will be installed around the fountain. Approximately two-thirds of the funding remains available for further streetscape improvements.

Max also highlighted the challenge of poor 5G connectivity, which is currently among the worst in the borough. He explained that he will be working with local residents' associations to identify suitable locations for the infrastructure needed to improve mobile coverage.

Community events and engagement

Other initiatives led by **Visit Wimbledon Village** include regular events such as the weekly Saturday "Walk and Talk" tours, as well as larger events including the South West London Armed Forces Day, held on 27 June. A special "Walk and Talk" tour of the Thai Buddhapadipa Temple will take place on 1 August to celebrate the temple's 60th anniversary.

Max also advised that Merton's first borough-wide marathon, planned for 14 March 2027, will pass through Village Ward. The event aims to increase community participation and deliver economic benefits across the borough, although some traffic disruption is anticipated.

Max confirmed that the Southside Hustle car gathering is now under the Council's management due to its growing popularity, with attendances exceeding 200 vehicles each month. Plans are in place to introduce improved parking enforcement and formal event management to address road safety concerns.

9. Any Other Business

Friends of Fishpond Wood

At the previous AGM, David Jenkins drew members' attention to Fishpond Wood. Adjacent to Warren Farm, the woodland contains wetlands surrounded by mature oak and hazel trees. The ponds support a wide variety of wildlife, including frogs, toads, newts, dragonflies, and spectacular displays of bluebells in the spring.

Owned and managed by Merton Council, Fishpond Wood requires additional funding and ongoing maintenance, particularly to repair the boardwalk that provides access for visitors to enjoy its flora and fauna. We are delighted to report that sufficient funding has now been secured, and the repair work is currently underway.

Dons Local Action Group – Rosie Caley, Chair

Rosie Caley, a local resident and Chair of the Dons Local Action Group, gave an overview of the organisation, its history, and the ways in which residents can become involved.

The group was established during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide emergency food and practical support to vulnerable residents. It now supplies tailored weekly food packages for up to eight weeks, including fresh produce and other essential items.

The organisation has since expanded its work to include the distribution of furniture, digital devices, school uniforms, and musical instruments, helping to address a wider range of poverty-related needs.

Volunteers from a wide variety of backgrounds contribute to the group's work and enjoy a strong community spirit, supported by social events such as pub quizzes and annual tea parties.

Partnerships with local businesses and charities have strengthened the organisation's fundraising efforts, including the recent acquisition of a refrigerated van, which has significantly enhanced its logistical capacity.

Photography Competition

Residents attending the AGM had the difficult task of selecting their favourite photograph from the many outstanding entries submitted to the Association's photography competition. It was a closely contested competition, with first prize awarded to Andrew Durant. All of the entries can be viewed on our website.

Local Businesses and Services

Emma Pope informed residents that a number of local businesses operate from the Heston Business Centre, behind Wimbledon Common Golf Club. These include digital services, plumbing and heating, furniture restoration, and a Pilates clinic.

The Association proposes to promote these businesses on its website in return for discounts or special offers for local residents. Emma also invited any members with a business or service they would like to promote to contact the Association.

Meeting Closure

Emma brought the meeting to a close by thanking all the speakers and everyone who attended. She encouraged residents to contact her directly if they had any issues they would like the WCWRA to consider. Her contact details are available on the Association's website: www.wcwra.com.