

## All change for Wandle Valley Regional Park

The process of the Wandle Forum evolving to become the consultee body for, and represented on, the WVRP has required countless meetings and piles of paperwork to study for both Angela and myself, all driven forward by Peter Wilkinson, the WVRP's interim CEO.

As you know it is clear the implications for the Wandle Forum of the WVRP's management set up and to a lesser extent for other partners, will be profound. But I believe they should be viewed as solid progress towards meeting the long term aims of Forum members – aims that are wholly consistent with caring for the river and linked open spaces whilst promoting its benefits and enhancing access for the community.

We identified the need to substantially change the Wandle Forum's membership structure and operating methods so that they can meet this new landscape of partner

relationships and the interim CEO and Development Board have accepted our rationale hence the need to call an SGM (Special General Meeting). Having gained agreement that the Forum focusses primarily on being the voice of the 'network' of local communities along the valley rather than a 'forum' including all LA officers and institutional experts, means that our aims, opinions and responses will be clearer. We will, of course, continue to ask for and value the expertise and advice of the LAs and specialist institutions, as informing our own views and agenda.

That we have two rather than one seat originally offered on the WVRP Trust means that we have not only gained the respect of the outgoing LA Development Board but we will have an audible voice on the board and back up should one Forum trustee be unavailable and tasks arising can be shared.

## Representation on the WVRP board

The Forum SGM was specifically called to elect Forum members to the position of WVRP Trustees and to agree some of the basic operational changes we will need to make. As only Angela and I offered our nominations that has now been done. I hope we can regard that as a vote of confidence on members' part as opposed to, vote by default or a realisation of the amount of additional time it will need to do the job properly! Anyway assuming the former – thank you for your confidence. We are both clear that it is

quite a responsibility to ensure that Forum members views and concerns are brought to the attention of those that can address them and campaign for agreed aims and projects. Our position on the WVRP Trust will enable us to take up this task much more effectively than before.

All current Forum members including LA officers and current institutional members, are invited to the SGM.

# Forum Operations – the choices ahead

So with our new more community based membership we will need to make a number of operating decisions. Part of the reason for circulating this newsletter prior to the SGM is to list some of these decisions so we are better prepared to have a more constructive discussion at that meeting.

1. How frequently should we meet?
2. Where should we meet and what at time?
3. What are our operational funding needs?
4. What further Forum officers do we need?
5. Does our constitution need to change?
6. Will we need an executive committee?
7. Who will take minutes and provide services?
8. Should we change our name?
9. Should we apply for charitable status?
10. Extent we need to recruit more members?
11. What sort of web presence for the Forum?
12. Who else should be invited to our meetings?

## Forum Aims

All of this re-organisation should not be seen to imply we have forgotten our main purpose which has not changed except perhaps in covering the whole WVRP area rather than just the river. The aims of the Forum and the individual aims and responses of its members remains our main agenda. As such we should use the opportunity provided by the current changes to review these, update ideas, and look at priorities. We need to see how the HLF programme is contributing towards the Forums aims and to ensure that as the consultee body we are consulted.

We should ensure that we fully understand what projects and issues are currently being addressed and what is not. In particular we should:

1. Ensure we are aware and fully informed on:
  - current and imminent HLF proposals,
  - the effects of the Wandle Trusts Catchment Plan
  - the future of the Wandle Festival
  - projects already in the pipeline
  - does the Green Grid (F8) cover our aspirations.
2. Formulate our own agenda by reviewing each member's aspirations, ideas and concerns then prioritise them and table them as appropriate with the WVRP and other relevant bodies.
3. We will need to consider the HLF programme as a matter of urgency as there is a deadline for projects and consultation.

## Please come to the SGM - 26 March 6.00pm

So it is important for members to come to the SGM at Morden Hall Cottage with their views and we look forward to seeing you.

**As mentioned already we welcome ALL current members, to the SGM to share their ideas for the future of the Forum.**

The Shadow Trust has already been briefed and there will be one further meeting of the Management Board and Development Board before the Trust drops its shadow status.