



Wandle Valley Forum NEWS UPDATE

Issue No.9

April 2014

Reviewing the Big Wandle Initiatives, Member Group Priorities, Poetry in the Valley, Poulter Park Projects, Consultation Procedure, Greenways & Quietways – what's the difference? What's the Green Grid?

New format

The April 10 WVForum Executive Committee meeting agreed that the News Update should go to single column format as research suggests it is easier to read and reduces the opportunity for mistakes and 'random paragraph relocation' it also calms the editor!

Reviewing the big Wandle Initiatives.

With the Regional Park Trust about two years old and now headed by its second CEO, Sue Morgan, it is timely to review what has been happening over and above drawing a line on a map. There are three major initiatives underway and they include both hard (actual earth moving) and soft projects like outreach and education. They are: >



Poulter Park, location of some of the best views across Wandle Valley, will benefit from Big Green fund projects including the access to Watermeads and the Wandle Trail and the recent clean-up.

- **The Big Green Fund Award** from The Mayor's Office (GLA & TfL)
- **Living Wandle** from the Landscape Partnership Fund (HLF Award £2m)
- **The Catchment Plan** for the River Wandle's water catchment and communities

In addition there has been the establishment of an Administrator (Tina Corr), office and identity for the Regional Park Trust itself.

The Big Green Fund

Peter Wilkinson's big initiative to tap into Boris's Big Green Fund. The result will be: substantial improvements in **Poulter Park**, including the **Wandle Trail** and opening up the **Watermeads** for the first time since the land was acquired by the National Trust 100 years ago. If that's exactly a century it is perhaps an added excuse for a celebration!

Living Wandle Landscape Partnership programme

This programme of projects is collectively known as the 'Living Wandle'. Primarily supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, but with match funding from all partners, the Forum would like to very much welcome the new staff, Rebecca Watts (Programme Manager), Louise Crothall (Project Officer) and Tina Corr (Administrator). Alongside Sue Walton, the team are based at the Old Book Shop in Morden Hall Park. The Wandle Valley Forum are in a great position to support the Living Wandle projects and encourage Forum members to share the news and get involved

Below is additional information from Rebecca Watts.

The 'Living Wandle' Landscape Partnership Scheme is a 4 year programme funded by Heritage Lottery Fund. It seeks to engage as many people as possible with the river in all 4 boroughs. There are 17 different projects delivered by a range of partners on the themes of Conservation, Community, Access/Learning and Training/Skills. These will be interlinked through the delivery of a volunteer plan and interpretation strategy.

It has been born from intensive consultation along the Wandle Valley and we are excited that the delivery phase has now commenced. There will be many opportunities for volunteering coming up in the future. For longer term volunteers involved in the 17 projects, there will be training opportunities to help provide the skills needed and a legacy for years to come.

A list of the different partners and their projects is given below:

The Wandle Trust: river restoration, tackling invasive species, identifying pollution, discovering the source of the Wandle, schools education programme

Croydon Council: Restoration of Waddon Ponds

Merton Council: Restoration of the Wandle through Ravensbury Park

Groundwork London: Oral history project, film/theatre project

London Wildlife Trust: Engaging with Estate communities through river walks and events

Wandle Valley Festival: River Celebration events

Wandle Piscators: Creation of young angling club along the Wandle

Wandle Regional Park Trust: installing 'gateways' along the Wandle to improve access

Merton Council: developing Merton Priory Chapter House as a visitor centre with Merton Priory Trust

National Trust: creating a boardwalk at Morden Hall Park

Living Wandle Team: mapping the historical treasures of the Wandle and developing heritage walks

Living Wandle Team: Climate change awareness tours and creation of film

Living Wandle Team: creating an online Living Memory Digital Archive, river warden scheme and providing volunteer training.

More information including updates on project progress can be found at:

www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk/projects/living-wandle and our 'Living Wandle Landscape Partnership Scheme' facebook page.

We are trying to tap into as many different groups and potential volunteers as possible to engage them with the river. We are hoping that by becoming part of our Living Wandle database we can keep everyone updated on opportunities and events coming up through a quarterly newsletter. We will make sure that people have the option to opt out if they wish to stop receiving these.

We would like to tie in with existing activities happening along the Wandle, please get in contact if you would like to speak with us. Many thanks,

Rebecca Watts. Living Wandle Landscape Partnership Scheme Programme Manager

The Catchment Plan

This is an initiative from the Wandle Trust (which is right at the heart of their mission) with the support of a Catchment Plan Steering Group made up of Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and Water Companies. The aims are to improve water quality in terms of cleanliness and varied flow rate and high levels of biodiversity, which will provide healthier fish and therefore better fishing. Access and engagement aims include using the river as a focus of education and environmental awareness.

For more info on these go to the **Wandle Valley Regional Park** and **Wandle Trust** Websites.

The Views of Member Groups

The Forum as an umbrella association seeks to represent a membership of local community and charity groups and as we deal with major institutions, mainly in the public sector, we must be seen to do just that. That is why it is important that editorial from members appears in this News Update. In fact one of the benefits of your group joining as an official Forum member is the opportunity to put forward your concerns for consideration for Forum campaigning support.

Although all members share the Forum's core values as defined in our constitution, it is important that editorial, as well as distinguishing fact from opinion, reflects the views of the group to which individuals belong. With about sixty groups on our roll and thirty as frequent attenders of big Forum meetings that should give us a wide pool from which to attract news, ideas and concerns that we can support, air and amplify.

So I'm pleased to report that this issue takes a step forward in that process with some highly relevant input from **Friends of Mitcham Common** as well as input we have received or gleaned from other sources and which should be of interest to all members.

Of course, as with many controversial issues in local government, the Weir Road/Wandle Trail project could not in practice be put to a quantifiable vote. Nevertheless it is the Forum's role to reflect the feelings of any majority giving voice on a specific issue. If we don't – what is our purpose! But a more in depth coverage of a group's members views helps give credibility to our consultee role and indicate to all landowners or project initiators that such community views should be taken into account.

BSJB

What is the Green Grid?

The ALGG is a major GLA initiative to encourage the development and use of open space to the benefit of all Londoners and it is as far as possible broken into areas of related or potentially linked open spaces. It is in effect a huge potential project archive designed as a planning aid.

It is made up of 13 'Area Frameworks' covering all of Greater London and some of the fragile Green Belt. The Wandle Valley is 'Area Framework 8' and is largely but not exclusively dominated by the open spaces included within the Regional Park's boundary.

ALGG built up the area archive of possible projects after much research and it gave rise to the Big Green Fund bid as well as contributing much to the programme of work and aspirations of the Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust and guided local councils' open spaces strategies. So it is highly relevant to the communities of the Wandle Valley.

Area Framework 8 currently catalogues about 120 projects, some of which are groups of projects. It is simply too big a document to even summarise here but it can be downloaded from the GLA website. Search for ALGG and click on the '**AF08**'.

BSJB

Greenways, Quietways & Super which ways?



Wandle Trail at northern end of Ravensbury Park facing southern fence of Morden Hall Park and showing rear of building that has been linked to a possible future home for Wandle Museum.

The government policy of encouraging walking and cycling is rightly being encouraged and therefore attracts funding more easily which is why the WVRP is going to see many more projects like the Wandle Trail upgrades as demonstrated by the item from Friends of Mitcham Common below. The problem is that these 'ways' come in several varieties of specification and name.

An 'unsegregated, mixed use path for cycling and walking' is something we can all grasp but clearly it would be easier to call it something shorter, hence Greenway, Quietway and Superhighway – but how do they differ? As consultees we need to be clear about their precise meaning, to make an appropriate response based on facts, especially if their specification might on occasion be controversial. To prepare ourselves for our consultee task it's worth looking at the status and definition of 'Superhighway', 'Greenway' and 'Quietway' by referring to Mayor Boris's Cycling Strategy and other reports. Here is a brief summary of the differing path types:

Superhighways: The basic strategy document describes the cycle lane along the Embankment from the Houses of Parliament to Chelsea Bridge, for example, as a 'Superhighway for fast commuting cyclists'. These are the blue painted lanes which are to be improved to emulate Holland's urban cycle lanes and which are usually regulated like bus lanes. They can come with a solid or broken white edge. If there is no edge it is not clear how 'super' they are.

Quietways: You've guessed it. This refers to cycle lanes in quieter suburban side streets but are still part of a network to key destinations for, according to the report, 'a different sort of cyclist' – maybe sporting tweed rather than lycra?

Greenways: According to the TfL's 'Greenway Monitoring Report' (search key for web) these are like 'Quietways' but err.... different in that they are for mixed cyclists and mixed walkers (i.e. young & old/commuting & leisure) providing, safe quiet routes through parks, green spaces and lightly trafficked streets. Even some Sustrans people were not sure about this and therefore not clear about its mandatory specification. Greenways are also designed for people of all levels of mobility.

Central London Grid: The Greenway Monitoring report mentions the Central London (Cycling) Grid which I assume refers to all grades of marked cycle routes in central London.

Mini-Holland Programme

This is a programme which, according to the Greenways report, recognises the 'greater importance of cycling in outer London boroughs' and is designed to overlay a grid of marked routes connecting outlying town centres inside the Green Belt.

OTHER RELATED INITIATIVES

Blue Ribbon Network: Just to avoid confusion I mention this network that relates to river and canal routes within the All London Green Grid (ALGG) area. Perhaps not quite emulating the Dutch canal barges with the inevitable bike on the roof but very relevant to Thames tributaries even if it was only an April fool spoof in the local Guardian about the new Wandle Ferry Service from Carshalton to Wandsworth!

National Cycle Network: A Sustrans conceived cycling and walking network now stretching some 14,500 miles to every major city in the UK.

Connect 2: A Sustrans Project that gains funding for major cycle/walkways across the country (84 according to their website).

NOTE: The new Highway Code falls short in advising ALL road users about the different types of cycle lane in mixed traffic roads. It says that the solid or broken white line should be used as per bus lane regulations but makes no mention of blue or green surfaced unoutlined cycle lanes.

The Forum supports safe routes for cyclists and walkers throughout the Wandle Valley. It also supports the protection of landscape character and less intrusive development. These worthy aspirations can sometimes conflict and therefore require serious consultation between landowners, WVRP CEO & Board and its consultee body – the Wandle Valley Forum - which has been asked to represent Valley communities.

BSJB

A visit to the Wandle Industrial Museum, Mitcham

This museum is a hidden gem right by Mitcham's Cricket Green and Vestry Hall. It was founded in 1983 by two men who had a common interest in the River Wandle and its industries, Harry Galley and the late Kevin Leyden. For some years now it has been due to move to Ravensbury Mill and this will hopefully happen soon.

In order to bring this very interesting museum to the attention of more people I have been organising short walks (in association with the Sutton and Wandle Valley Ramblers) starting from Mitcham Junction and finishing with a visit to the museum. The first two walks were very enjoyable but poorly attended for the following reasons. In March 2012 it was a freezing foggy day and the walk last July which took place on a beautiful hot day coincided with Andy Murray playing in the final of the mens' singles at Wimbledon! So there were only a few of us to enjoy the lovely homemade cakes which the museum kindly provided for us on both occasions.

Finally, in January this year there was a good turn-out of 35 people and the museum made us very welcome although tea and cake had to be served in two shifts! I hope to put more walks of this kind on the programme but in the meantime the museum is open every Wednesday from 1 to 4 pm and every Sunday from 2 to 5 pm and is well worth a visit."

MN

Consultation on a shared cycle and pedestrian path

ACTION PLEASE Group member consultation
An item from the MAGPIE, Newsletter of Friends of Mitcham Common.

Which way for Mitcham Common?

You may remember that we wrote to all Friends last November on this subject, outlining plans and asking for your views. The original plan was for the new path to run through the common, some distance from the main road but this was later amended. The present plan is for the shared path to run next to Croydon Road from Cedars Avenue to the BP garage. This path would strip away a sizeable chunk of the Common - a mile long and 3.0 to 3.5m wide –which is approximately half a hectare of Common land.

The Friends Committee would like to get your views on whether you support or oppose this plan. Please contact us by email (or by letter to Melanie Nunzet, 24 Walsingham Road, Mitcham CR4 4LN) and answer the specific questions below:

- Do you think putting a shared cycle and pedestrian track alongside Croydon Road is a good idea?
- Would you prefer Croydon Road to be reworked to accommodate more cycling?
- Would you support a campaign by the Friends against this shared track?

At their meeting on 12 March 2014 the Conservators deferred judgement until they had more information about the design and a full set of drawings. This matter will therefore be considered at the next Conservators' meeting in June.

Friends of Mitcham Common

Hackbridge Village Regeneration

The regeneration plan that BioRegional has been leading for the 'Heart of Hackbridge' is now well underway and the new wider pavement and new LED street lighting are already giving a clue as to the look of the newly regenerated townscape. With the first of the big industrial sheds on the Felnex site now being demolished Hackbridge village will look very different in the near future especially when the Mile Road Bridge Gateway is completed.

BSJB

Last battle still ahead to stop incinerator

It is reported that a local resident has taken Sutton Council to court over the Incinerator. The Forum which has campaigned against the installation has only heard dissenting voices from members to the erection of this huge metal clad building

There are diverging views as to what the main objection should be with some objectors quoting toxic air pollution. Others are just appalled at such a huge facility overwhelming the landscape adjacent to the newly formed regional park and some object that even new standard incinerators are not as efficient or clean as new gas plasma technology which has recently been adopted by some councils.

The quandary for Sutton and for WVRP Trustees is twofold: Viridor, the facility owner, is a major fund provider to the Regional Park but would not look kindly towards those objecting to its plans. Whilst the waste management consortium of councils will have to dispose of their waste by other means once the newly extended landfill based 'Hackbridge Hill' is completed – if not EU fines may be imposed. So it's a difficult problem which might still be resolved if imagination is used and negotiations reviewed with parties being less risk averse to new technology.

BSJB

Access or no access from Durnsford Recreation Ground



Wimbledon Park Residents Association has been campaigning for access to the Wandle for over 20 years now from the West bank on the Earlsfield/Southfields border. The Weir Rd Industrial Estate blocks us off at present. As you can see from the Streams of the Wandle map, water from Wimbledon Common's Rushmere ravine flows from there to Wimbledon Park Lake which in turn flows along Wimbledon Park Brook and into the Wandle. If only local people along its course could access the river with such efficiency!

We would like Wimbledon Park itself to be included in the WVRP as it is less than 1km (1/2 a mile) from the river and access the the Wandle, ideally via Durnsford Recreation Ground (which is in the WVRP), or via The Haslemere Industrial Estate at Ravensbury Terrace.

We are however very pleased that some more of the path along the river at the Earlsfield Gap will be connected up by at least a hundred metres at the Knaresborough Drive development by King George's Park.

DF/WPRA

WVRP Materials Palette

The long awaited, revised Materials Palette for the Regional Park will be resubmitted shortly to the Board of Trustees. It is an in-house design manual for such aspects of the park as path surfaces, signposts, seating, waste bins, interpretation boards, based on not too prescriptive design philosophy. It is here that guidelines will be provided covering approx. 20km of path specifications and we hope covering decisions on the access/landscape balance compromises that are needed.

It includes WVRP corporate branding proposals (produced pro-bono by Barker Langham Design) which have already been introduced in communications and uses the name 'Wandle Valley' as the park's chosen brand name following in Lee Valley's footsteps – if not wealth!.

BSJB

A missed view from Wimbledon Park!

It is ironic that, having requested more editorial from members, I have received an item from John White of Wimbledon Park Residents Assoc which unfortunately didn't make it into the previous edition. But thank you John – your views and those of our other members concerning aspects of the WVRP are always welcome. **Ed.**



Celebrating 35 years Community Farming at Deen City Farm

Named after the now demolished Aberdeen Road in Mitcham, site of a commercial pig farm during the 1920s and 30s, Deen City Farm was established as a community project in nearby Batsworth Road, during the late 1970s. Here it grew in popularity and expanded to include a riding school and gardens, before moving to its current location on the historical Bunces Meadow at Morden Hall Park in 1994.

The Farm now covers around 5 acres and is home to animals of all shapes and sizes, including pigs, sheep, horses, ferrets, alpacas and even a barn owl. As a registered charity, it aims to enrich lives through rural learning in a local urban environment. It does this by encouraging local people to participate in activities and events throughout the year. These include mother & toddler groups, horse riding lessons, gardening & craft workshops and seasonal events, such as a Harvest festival in September.

There is also an active volunteer scheme, open to people of all ages and abilities, and a busy education programme, which works with around forty schools to help teach local children about healthy eating, farming and the natural world.

The farm has managed to secure funding for a number of exciting new developments to mark its 35th anniversary, including a refurbished shop and brand new play area, both due for completion by Easter.

If you would like to volunteer, make a donation or just fancy a bit of a wander round, then the Farm is open to the public from 10am-4pm, Tues-Sun and it's completely free to visit. You can also find out more information about the farm's work and upcoming events at:

Website: www.deencityfarm.co.uk

Simon Lynn, Operations Manager, Deen City Farm

Culvers Lodge, Hackbridge

Attempts to save this idyllic period house continue with Wandle writer Bob Steel leading a campaign with support from local Hackbridge community groups and the Forum. It is hoped that a meeting on 9 May will put a case for using the building for WVRP admin which may be a solution.

BSJB

A Poem by Valerie Coleman

Valerie Coleman's poem (collected by Paul Williams) about the Wandle, reflects its changing condition and as such is more than nostalgic musing in Betjamenesque meter but has historic value that should be accessible in the relevant local heritage archives. Although I don't know when it was written one assumes from the writing that Valerie had seen it at least before the urban explosion of the fifties and sixties buried part of it under Southside Mall (then the Arndale) for example, and before some of the love and lottery funding of recent years was spent on it. Signs are that it is rising again to almost its pre-industrial glory – but hopefully not so high it floods downstream.

The Wandle



The infant river, born in ponds
Is free to run. No longer in bonds

Through flower-strewn banks it sparkles and leaps.
Through suburban back gardens, it silently creeps

Birds preen, dive, squabble and scoot
Heron, Kingfisher, Mallard and Coot

Past red-brick Carew, under bridges of stone
Your banks may be busy, you go on alone

Past Morden and Merton. Diverted by greed
The great wheel still turns; shoppers pay it no heed

Now to the Thames you have nearly run
The sparkle is dulled; you are too tired for fun

Swallowed by Wandsworth, drowned by the tide
The brave little Wandle has finally died

Walking in the Valley



Walkers outside the current home of the Wandle Industrial Museum

As a member of the Sutton and Wandle Valley Ramblers Melanie continues her enjoyable and interesting walks programme this season. For all walks starting at Mitcham Junction meet at bus stop on bridge.

Date	Meeting place/time	Walk description	Distance
Sat 24 May	Mitcham Junction 3 pm	Walk around Mitcham Common .	3-4 miles
Sat 7 June	Wandle Park Tram Stop 9.30 am	Walk along the Wandle Trail. Finish Morden Hall Park (Phipps Bridge Tram Stop). Coffee stop in Beddington Park or Carshalton. Part of an all day event between Waddon Ponds and Wandsworth, more start and finish options available. See the Sutton & Wandle Valley Ramblers' website for details.	5-6miles, linear
Sun 27 July	Carshalton Station 11.15 am	Carshalton Lavender 2014 Harvest Visit to Wilderness Island and Stanley Road Allotments for barbecue lunch/refreshments and other attractions. Bring your own scissors!	4-5 miles
Friday 12 Sept	Mitcham Junction 2 pm	Wandle walk to Carshalton Ponds, tea at Honeywood to finish (part of Merton's Celebrating Age 2014)	3-4 miles, linear

Come and join us for an hour's walk around **Beddington Park or Waddon Ponds** every Friday morning at 10 am. Meet by St Mary's Church, Church Road, Wallington SM6 7NJ (Buses: 407 from Sutton, 463 from Mitcham). Refreshments available at church after walk. Contribution to church funds please. Tour of this beautiful 10th century church possible.

After the walk on Friday 9 May there will be a celebration to mark the tenth anniversary of the Beddington Park walk!!

Please email on mlnnunzet@gmail.com or call 07944 833605 for further info or to book where necessary. NB: the second letter of the email address is 'l', not 'i'.

Spring Clean-up

Following calls from outgoing CEO Peter Wilkinson, the Wandle Trust supported by several forum member groups, turned up at Poulter Park to undertake a clean-up operation prior to the start of work on the Big Green Fund projects.

The Forum contributed its own kit and fielded two squads who meticulously cleaned up around the football pitch and stadium car park perimeter. It is now official - Twix wrappers followed by Special Brew cans are the most popular cast off items! Thanks to all members who turned up and to Peter Wilkinson (now big Green Fund project Manager) and Erica Evans at Wandle Trust for organising the event.

BSJB



Wandle Websites

Wandle Trust

Clean-up programme: Would you like to get mucky and eat home-made cake on a Sunday every month? Check out www.wandletrust.org for details.

Mitcham Common walks – To find out if and when these walks will be starting up again please log onto www.merton.gov.uk/walk4life.

Friends of Mitcham Common

Please contact me if you'd like to subscribe to the Magpie newsletter and support the Friends in their valuable work protecting the Common. A year's subscription costs £2.50 and five years just £10. You will receive a free copy of the recent publication: Mitcham Common: A Short History (by Janet Morris) and several newsletters every year. There are still copies of Eric Montague's hardback book 'Mitcham Common' available to purchase at a reasonable price. See Friends page on www.mitchamcommon.org

Deen City Farm

Website: www.deencityfarm.co.uk

Wandle Valley Regional Park

Remember to refer to the Wandle Valley Regional Park website which is full of useful and updated information, including information about the Forum. www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk

Coming Soon??

The Forum's own website needs to be progressed asap and it will need input from members to make it happen as our funds don't yet stretch to hiring professionals.



Wandle Valley Forum is the umbrella association for community groups & charities in the Wandle Valley.

NewsUpdate Editor: Bruce St. Julian-Bown. Contact: bsjb@onetel.com. Please inform the editor of any inaccuracies. All articles are by the Editor unless otherwise stated and the opinion of the writer.