



Wandle Valley Forum

NEWS UPDATE

Issue No.10

July 2014

Incinerator – Review - Wandsworth Waterfront Paths – Hackbridge Village Regeneration - Birdlands – 900 Years of Merton Priory – Protecting local heritage Mitcham Cricket Green Celebrations

Beddington Incinerator under Review

We hear that grounds have been confirmed for a Judicial Review of the Incinerator planning application (Viridor/Sutton Council) this is a major achievement by campaigners. The Judicial Review is on the basis of a conflict of interest as Sutton Council had both approved the plan and signed the contract with Viridor. As this not an environmental or technical issue it cannot be assumed that a positive conclusion will result. However the hope has been expressed that either more appropriate locations on the alternative site list surveyed by Viridor may be reviewed but by an independent panel resulting in a different location or new technology and alternative strategies for waste management and energy generation should be considered over 'old fashioned' incinerator tech following the recent decision by France and some UK councils to use new cleaner technology. Sutton is the lead council of the consortium which also includes Kingston, Croydon and Merton.

COMMENT

A huge metal clad incinerator on the edge of a regional park's nature reserve is a juxtaposition of the sublime with the, if not ridiculous, then misconceived and is in no way compensated for by the utility's funding contributions to the WVRP. However we recognise the difficulties for Sutton Council in meeting their EU obligations on reducing landfill and for Viridor in following their normal commercial interests. New technology has progressed significantly since the original bid and should be actively pursued, rather than simply left to the cost-only led tendering procedure of the past. Although the Environment Agency approved the plan it would be reassuring to understand their criteria rather better.

Waterfront paths in Wandsworth Town Centre



Feather's Wharf: Shows fenced off riverfront path which is both Thames Path and Wandle Trail.

The Wandsworth Society, with Forum support, continues to press the Council to open up the Thames/Wandle path round Feather's Wharf at the Wandle mouth and not grant permanent planning application for storage facilities on this key site. It is also pressing for a coherent strategy for all waterfront paths between the Thames and King George's Park. With the Ram Brewery scheme due to start shortly it is important that Wandle Trail users and town centre shoppers have adequate space.

Sue Morgan WVRP CEO has accompanied the **Forum (BSJB)**, **Wandsworth Society (Shirley Passmore)** and **Riverside Quarter RA (Roger Bone)** to survey the area and is clear on the opportunity and local aspirations for this critical Delta gateway to regional park. A report by WSP Consultants 'Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan' which considers matters not detailed in the original planning application sets out several factors in order to keep within the Environmental Impact Assessment guidelines. These include a path width on both sides of the Wandle of 5.45m. This should be adequate for all. If Wandsworth Council follow through by opening Feather's Wharf riverfront path some mitigation of the massive density of this site will have been achieved. The Council's Ecological Officers have been very thorough in their input into this aspect of the Ram Brewery development and the benefits are clear in the WSP report.



Domino effect - Garratt Lane Burial Ground

The approval of the Brewery site has created a domino effect with a yet another big new development across the road linking to Garratt Lane Burial Ground in Wandsworth town centre - also part of the regional park. This is part of the College site which already has a bold new and colourful block and is proposing to fund its further development by pulling down some existing blocks and building 4 new ones. Including a large tower although there are clear benefits including the demolition of the cheap 60s blocks used by both the college and the council (on Garratt Lane).

Hackbridge Village Regeneration

Village Centre: It is good to see Hackbridge village centre looking very user friendly. New seating, planting and road realignment all add to the village ambience. Meanwhile the remains of the Felnax industrial estate bite the dust, or rather becomes dust, in preparation for 700 new homes and a mega Sainsbury's. This cannot help but add to local traffic on the other hand it is offset by locals not needing to go so far for their own weekly shop. Locals have pointed out that in spite of consultation inadequate safety provision for cyclists has been made.

Field north of BedZed: The 2nd round consultation meeting hosted by **BioRegional** is of great interest as they seek to define local people's ideas and aspirations for the neighbourhood. This is good consultation and there are several interesting ideas, from vegetable and sunlight harvesting to an ecology centre. There is also the question of the extraction of a relatively thin layer of gravel under the field, usually a legally requirement. However, prevailing opinion seems to be that the financial benefit for doing this may be marginal and it might be possible to avoid the process which would also keep the field off limits for years. The Forum promotes access to all areas of the regional park as long as they have been made safe and are in character. So still some work to do here including funding of favoured ideas.

A potential threat is that Sutton Council remains interested in a school on the site or part of it. (Not to be confused with the smaller field to the east of Bedzed). Whilst this is a justified need, it has always been the Forum view that this particular patch of Metropolitan Open Land was not the place for it as the area is designated a regional park because of its unique continuum of open space. The need to generate funds to make it a safe and integral part of the Wandle Valley regional park remains and a modest scale Ecology Centre close to BedZed would need little land and would benefit all local people plus generate some modest funding whilst leaving some earning potential from school visits. But that is very different from building a large school with many acres of enclosed playing fields and hard ball courts.

Wandle Trail - Afterthoughts on Weir Rd

Walking the Weir Rd wilderness stretch of the Wandle Trail for the first time since its new hard surface



was laid drew the following observations: It was certainly a bright, new path and there were no puddles. There seemed no more, cyclists or walkers than usual on a late sunny Sunday morning. The few cyclists were nearly all travelling faster than they used to. The additional half meter verges on either side of the 2.5m path added enough width for 4 cycles or buggies abreast. However on the chicanes cyclists should watch for the remains of loose sandstone shingle which could be dangerous. So commuting cyclists are happy others less so but for the first time in years I

heard a cycle bell tinkle as opposed to a politely mumbled 'excuse me' – clearly someone not bothered by a fear of the bell sounding too aggressive !

Merton Council's 'not hearing' the reservations made (after the initial specification was published) left their only response as 'they could have made it 3m instead of 2.5m wide'. But 2.5m was a given at the start of the consultation process so it was a statement of fact rather than consultation. The voices of the majority who favoured landscape character over increased access of what was once a wilderness with a rural path and is now a cycling highway would have been largely silenced by 2.0m compromise.

At least many, if not all, cyclists will be happy to have a safer and more tranquil north/south commuting route and it must be safer than Garratt Lane which is good. However we will need to ensure that the eventual increase in cycle traffic and greater speed doesn't increase the risk to riders and pedestrians.

Lessons have been learned and the consultation process strengthened with responses take into account as evidenced by the Poulter Park consultation. The WVRP and the LA's are also sending park project and relevant planning applications for comment. So we keep a watchful eye (the Forum's role after all) and we will remain vigilant that at least some of our comments find their way into plans and specifications following consultation.



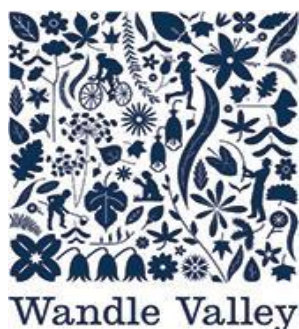
Spencer Road Wetlands

Peter Wilkinson (previous WVRP CEO now managing the Big Green Fund project in Poulter Park) informs that Splash Projects have produced a sponsorship presentation to show what funding could do for this uniquely fascinating and relatively unknown wilderness. The result? The renewed board walk wetlands area which can only be visited by appointment will become a wildlife treasure for the WVRP..

**Next Forum meeting (tomorrow!)
Thursday July 24, 6.30pm, upstairs at the
William Morris pub, Merton Abbey**

**The latest news update on Poulter Park, the Big Green Fund and HLF projects
will be on the Agenda**

What's in a Name?



The regional park's very elegant branding and "Wandle Valley" name raises the issue of what is it best to call it. Referring to 'Wandle Valley Regional Park' all the time is rather long winded and 'Wandle Valley' whilst the brand name currently has a broader meaning locally because of its long established cluster of manufacturing and industrial heritage than anything else. In writing here we have for now taken to referring to it as the Wandle Valley regional park dropping the caps from regional park as they are a description. Any comments to the editor will be passed to the regional park's CEO.

How to protect local pubs, buildings & open spaces

Reproduced with thanks to Civic Voice

Waltham Forest Civic Society is the latest example of how local people are exploring new powers which can help to secure local buildings for the community. So far no buildings or open spaces in Waltham Forest are registered as Assets of Community Value. The Waltham Forest Civic Society want to change this.

As a first step, the Civic Society is organising a meeting with the main purpose of the meeting to explain the ACV community powers and how they can be applied at the local level. The group will then begin the process to set up a list of buildings accessible to the public that Waltham Forest residents feel should be kept in community use and to agree an initial shortlist of buildings that might be registered as ACVs. It is great to see another group joining the long list of civic groups utilising the Asset of Community Value powers. Interested in learning more about assets of community value?

A video is available see current edition of Civic Voice explaining what is involved?

Greyhound Stadium Development

Reported in the Wimbledon Park Residents Association spring newsletter

Not a few yards from the Wandle in Merton lies Wimbledon Greyhound Stadium and as with many large sites it is seen as ripe for development. There are two conflicting proposals, one is for the return of AFC Wimbledon football club – a team close to the hearts of many local people but likely to attract up to 10-20,000 in weekend crowds plus 613 new homes – a proposal that is being resisted by a clear majority as shown by a survey of over 200 sample homes by WPRA. The more favoured proposal is for a greyhound stadium and 400 new homes.

Wimbledon Park Residents Assoc have campaigned firstly to get proper consultation (sounds familiar?) which they succeeded in doing and now they are fighting hard against the proposed high density development.

Extracts from the WPRA Newsletter

We have explained in our submissions to Merton Council during the consultation period that we think that the proposal by Galliard Homes GLRA Ltd and AFC is incompatible with National Planning Policies. As we have mentioned, the site is one at highest risk of flooding and is in a transport area with a very poor rating and we do not think that it can be modified to satisfy the planning policies that apply. Planning policies are there to ensure that new developments do not adversely impact local residents and shopping centres. While we certainly do not oppose AFC Wimbledon coming back to the borough we do not think the Greyhound Stadium site is suitable.

Clearly, the Greyhound proposal does not have the same transport problems, as the crowds will be rather similar to those that presently use the stadium. It is also possible that they can design their proposal in such a way that they do satisfy the National Flooding Guidelines. We note that their proposed stadium only has three sides and the centre is an area which can be used to hold flood water; certainly they have submitted a comprehensive and interesting flood study at the consultation stages.

The survey carried out by the WPRA,showed that a large majority of residents are opposed to the proposal of Galliard Homes, GLRA Ltd and AFC Wimbledon. This concurs with the planning arguments we have consistently advanced and as a result we oppose the proposal of Galliard Homes GLRA Ltd and AFC Wimbledon and support the Greyhound proposal. We will be asking our local councillors, and the conservative grouping as a whole, if they will change their stance and clearly support the viewpoint of the residents in their ward.

The Outlook

Once Galliard Homes GLRA Ltd and AFC Wimbledon have made a planning application it will be considered by Merton Council who will at the same time notify the Mayor, Boris Johnson. It is rather likely that he will call in the application and decide on it himself. He has already made encouraging noises in favour of the Greyhound proposal and this, coupled with the planning difficulties of the other proposal, mean that there is everything to play for.

We will continue with our endeavours to ensure that that any development of the Greyhound Stadium is appropriate in planning terms; beneficial for the area and will take into account the interests of local residents who will be most affected.

For the latest and detailed information check the WPRA and Merton Council and websites.

WPRA website: www.wimbledonpark.com

MORE MEMBER UPDATES

Friends of Mitcham Common – Clean Up

Volunteers got together to collect 25 bags of rubbish in a clean-up of Mitcham Common at the weekend. The verges of the common near Commonsides East are among the areas to benefit from a spruce-up after the efforts of eight dedicated volunteers from the Friends of Mitcham Common group on Sunday, July 20. Volunteer Melanie Nunzetz, the organiser, said: "We collected cans and bottles. We can't keep on top of it." The group wore high visibility jackets and used litter picking sticks to collect the rubbish after a £50 grant from Capital Clean-up, a partnership campaign led by the Mayor of London to help Londoners work together to tidy up areas of the city. The £50 voucher will be used to purchase more bags and litter pickers for the next clean-up event at a date to be determined.

The AGM of the friends group will be held on Wednesday, September 3 at 7pm at the Mill House Ecology Centre in Windmill Road, Mitcham.

Beddington North Forum

Worries about odours from the sewage works continue to be a problem for the local community and questions as to whether Sutton BC is fulfilling its legal obligations are being aired on their Facebook site.

Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society

This active group Newsletter edited by Celia Bailey can be found on Facebook, while their website is being developed and their Newsletter is too long to be included here but is well worth reading. Many of their activities are mirrored across other members interests especially on heritage and biodiversity.

Croydon Rifle and Pistol Club, a target shooting club which is one of a number of specialist sports facilities located in the Wandle Valley Regional Park, continues to maintain its proud record of producing competitors capable of achieving national and international level. Two ladies and two men nurtured by the CRPC will be competing at the Commonwealth Games this year".

900 years of Merton Priory



Last look at the interior of Merton Priory prior to the main work on the new museum starting shortly

MERTON PRIORY TRUST

This year we're celebrating Merton Priory's 900th birthday - the original foundation was in 1114, and the original site was next to St Mary's Merton, the parish church of Merton Park. The Priory moved to its present site in 1117 (presumably they bought some land off Sainsbury's), which gives us another excuse for a celebration three years on!

This year a special 900th anniversary exhibition is being held throughout August (weekend afternoons) in the Museum of Wimbledon (22 Ridgway), telling the detailed story of Merton Priory. And this year we are ready to begin our major improvements to the Chapter House site, which we hope will be finished or well on the way in 2017.

We are poised to start these now, with the aid of last year's Heritage Lottery Fund grant as part of the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership. The first phase of the operation will cost £500,000, and the specialist architects Haverstock have been hired to carry it out. The Trust is delighted with their input, full of good ideas and an understanding both of the importance and the sensitivities of the site.

The first phase, in sum, is to open up the South side with a glass wall and new entrance, and to install proper services in what has so far been a very Spartan environment. The first job, starting July 29th, is to remove the huge amount of waste sand which was left on site 25 years ago, and reveal what remains underneath. Later phases will equip the Chapter House as a proper museum, educational resource, and venue for events to provide a sustainable revenue.

We are also actively involved in the conservation of the spectacular 200 metre stretch of the Priory's 14th century precinct wall, between Sainsbury's and the Pickle Ditch. The land belongs to the National Trust who have, along with Sainsbury's, recently cleared the dense undergrowth which has hidden the wall for 20 years. If you haven't seen this, the only part of the Priory left standing above ground by Henry VIII, I would be delighted to organise a viewing for Forum members.

John Hawks

Also at Merton Priory

Archaeology Weekend 26-27 July
London Open House 20-21 September 2014

Bird Lands

Beddington Farmlands: A plan is being discussed for the Farmlands area in consultation with Beddington Farmlands Bird Group. Members Peter Alfrey and Derek Coleman are amongst the regional park's most experienced birders and their knowledge about the threats to the biodiversity i.e. what birds eat and why they do or don't visit the area, is impressive. The challenge with the Farmlands area is to allow sufficient and carefully managed access for visitors and community observers to see and record arrivals and departures, at least with good binoculars without disturbing the birdlife and whole spectrum of biodiversity with which the site is blessed. Needless to say they have been at the forefront of the campaign against the incinerator. The Groups Annual Record is a revelation for all bird enthusiasts.

Melanie's Summer/Autumn Walks 2014

Date	Meeting place/time	Walk description	Distance
Sun 27 July	Carshalton Station 11.15 am (please note there will be a bus replacement service)	Carshalton Lavender 2014 Harvest Visit to Wilderness Island and Stanley Road Allotments for barbecue lunch/refreshments and other attractions. Bring your own scissors! Joint walk with the London Strollers	4-5 miles, easy, circular
Fri 12 Sept	Mitcham Junction Station 2 pm	Wandle Trail walk from Mitcham to Carshalton Ponds. Refreshments at end of walk at Honeywood Museum (part of Merton's Celebrating Age 2014).	3-4 miles, easy, linear
Sat 4 Oct	Mitcham Junction Station 2.30 pm	Walk around Mitcham Common. (Meet bus stop on bridge)	3-4 miles, easy, circular

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. Contribution to church funds please. Tour of church possible.

NOTE: On Friday 1 August we will be visiting the Beddington Park café after our walk as St Mary's centre will be unavailable. On offer will be tea or coffee with cake of choice £3, if you want to upgrade to latte, cappuccino or hot chocolate, £3.50 per head. Please call or email to book: Melanie Nunzet 07944 833605, or email; mlnuzet@gmail.com

Volunteering opportunity at the Honeywood Tea Room – Do you have a couple of hours to spare on Saturday or Sunday afternoons and would you like to join a small band of "Nippy" volunteers? If so, please contact Sue Kelsall on 020 8241 5679.

Mitcham Common Health Walk – Every Thursday meet Mitcham Junction at 11 am for 45 minute walk. Leaders: Cathy/Liz

Carshalton Environmental Fair

Bank Holiday Monday 25 August – 10.30 am – 5 pm

Birding at Beddington Farmlands

Sunday, 27 July Summer/Autumn Tours – 2 – 2.5 hrs (no toilets). Meet Hackbridge Station 9.15 to start 9.30. Parking costs £1/day. Sturdy footwear (preferably wellies). Required to sign access agreement to enter restricted area for first timers. Suggested donation to the Beddington Farm Bird Group £2. Led by Peter Alfrey and the Beddington Farmlands Bird Group. **Please email Peter at littleoakgroup@btinternet.com or call me to book.**

Mitcham Cricket Green celebration - Thurs July 31

We are celebrating the success of our Know Your Cricket Green project.

This will be in a marquee on Mitcham cricket ground between 5pm and 7pm on Thursday 31 July and we will be joined by the Mayor of Merton. The project has been supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The event will include:

- exhibitions, displays and information about the project
- the launch of our new audio trail
- a guided tour of the conservation cleaning work
- opportunities to visit the cricket pavilion on the oldest cricket ground in the world
- light refreshments
- update on latest Heritage Lottery Fund bid co-ordinated by Merton Council with the local community
- fun and games on the Green
- a Mitcham Cricket Club Colts match beginning at 6pm

L A T E N E W S

Hackbridge: Mile Road Bridge Gateway

A pocket park gateway for the Mile Road bridge at Hackbridge Village has been presented by BioRegional and will be discussed AT THE Forum meeting on Thursday.

Wandle Festival role passes to LWLP

From the Wandle Valley Festival website

“Since 2004 the Festival Trust has organised weekend activities at the beginning of June to raise awareness of the many natural and historical resources of the River Wandle. There are now a variety of new initiatives along the river which we think will increase access, information and participation in an on-going way.

Living Wandle Landscape Partnership

The Wandle Valley Festival is one of the partners in the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership programme, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our specific remit was to organise a launch event which would highlight the wide variety of regeneration and education projects.

At the end of September 2013, Trustees from the Festival organised the very successful launch at Morden Hall Park. This attracted a wide audience of all ages who were able to inter-actively experience the themes of the Living Wandle projects over the next four years and find out how they could participate.”

General information about the Living Wandle Landscape Partnership can be found at:

www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk/Projects/Living-Wandle

Your Forum Needs You

Anyone from eligible member groups who is interested in further assisting the Wandle Valley Forum in carrying out its role, please join us at the forthcoming Forum meeting on Thursday July 24, at the William Morris pub Merton Abbey and we can explain the options available and the help we need.

The Forum is looking for volunteers to:

- Join the Executive Committee
- Monitor development planning applications
- Contribute to the Newsletter
- Develop the website
- Assist with Membership and subscriptions

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

Beddington Farmlands Bird Group

Contact Peter Alfrey. Email: littleoakgroup@btinternet.com



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. Relevant contributions are welcome. Please inform the editor of any inaccuracies. Articles are by the Editor and the opinion of the writer unless otherwise stated.

Wandle Valley Forum is the consultee body for Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust. It provides a news, ideas, concerns and information network related to enhancing and safeguarding Wandle Valley regional park for over 50 community groups in the Wandle Valley.

