



Wandle Valley Forum

NEWS UPDATE

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Wandle Valley Forum AGM 2015

Wandle Valley Forum held our 3rd AGM on January 23rd, at the Colour House Theatre at Merton Abbey Mills. This included a special showing of 'Vandalis', a remarkable film by Peter Walder about the history of the Wandle and the election of new Chair – the supremely qualified Mitcham community stalwart, Tony Burton. The Executive Committee and officers were re-elected and we welcomed Bob Steele and thanked DeNica Fairman for her service. A presentation and vote of thanks went to departing Chair Bruce St. Julian-Bown, who remains on the Executive and Editor of the News Update.

The AGM excitement was followed by a networking party attended by about 35 members, catered for by Mary Hart's own secret recipe gruel - fit for the Dorchester, and John Hawks' notorious mulled wine provided the conviviality.

A word from our Chair

It's nearly 30 years since I first moved into the catchment of the Wandle and was put under its spell. I've run it, walked it, paddled in it, read about it, orienteered across it, celebrated it, enjoyed lectures on it, photographed it, explored it, found geocaches along it, seen a film about it, bird watched along it, trespassed by it, met and talked and campaigned about it and even contemplated kayaking it and still there is more to discover. The Wandle adds so much to our lives that it's no wonder the river provides such a powerful focus for the rich and diverse range of community groups and voluntary organisations who make up the Wandle Valley Forum. We exist to unite and strengthen your voice and it's quite a responsibility, so it is not without trepidation that I have taken on this role as your Chair.

As I look at our plans for the future I would welcome your thoughts and ideas so please do contact me using the email below. Already, I can see our priorities focusing around how we:

- Strengthen the role of Wandle Valley Forum as a focus for all the community groups, voluntary organisations and local people who care for the Wandle's future
- Provide an independent platform to champion the Wandle's cause and address those issues which affect the Wandle Valley as a whole due to their size or precedent
- Develop the partnership with the Wandle Valley Regional Park and strengthen the community voice in the way it is organised and run

To achieve this I am keen to:

- Review how we communicate and keep in touch with everyone to provide useful information and share experience, with a fresh focus on digital and social media alongside more opportunities to meet and talk socially
- Develop a shared prospectus and priorities for what we should stand for and to underpin Wandle Valley campaigns
- Extend our supporter base and look at how we are governed and funded

This will all need your help, ideas and support so please get involved and let us know your priorities for the Forum.

Finally, may I extend thanks from us all to the inspiration and leadership which Bruce St. Julian-Bown has given as our Chair? The rise and rise of the Wandle Valley and our Regional Park over the last decade has not come by chance. It is down to the extraordinary effort of a small number of Wandle heroes like Bruce and we owe them a huge debt. Bruce's commitment continues and with him and the rest of our Executive Committee I am looking forward to working with you all to secure the support and attention we all know the Wandle deserves.

Tony Burton
wandlevalleyforum@gmail.com





Wandle Delta with safeguarded east bank path

Wandle Trail / Thames Path link – a glimmer of hope?

Members of Wandsworth Society and Riverside Quarter Residents Assoc (RQRA) met Wandsworth (WBC) councillors Madden and McCausland assisted by council officers, in an attempt to progress the decade old campaign to open up the riverside path round the Feathers Wharf waterfront (Wandle mouth) effectively a gateway to Wandle Valley Regional Park.

A WBC officer explained that nothing had been done before as they could see no public benefit until the walkway over the waste transfer station had been opened linking the Wandle Trail and Thames Path. Strange as local community groups have been campaigning about it for years!

The following reasons to open it were raised:

1. The new riverside residents were voicing demands for better access to Trail and Path.
2. Wandle mouth west bank wildlife zone can only be viewed from Feathers Wharf (East bank).
3. The path is already fenced off so would not interfere with site development or interim use.
4. There may be a pot of 106 funding that could be tapped for the cost (est £20-30k).
5. A connected Wandle Trail from the Thames attracts ramblers indicating an economic benefit in bringing hundreds of visitors to Wandsworth town centre annually.
6. Help Wandsworth town centre's organic growth towards the Thames - an original Wandsworth Town Centre Partnership aim.
7. This section of path is safeguarded by Wandsworth Council.

And on reflection:

8. It is an aspiration of the Mayor's London Plan
9. To deny the community access to such a valued open space which should also include a modest piazza area on the river mouth seems perverse.
10. Could this be funded by GLA's 'Pocket Park' funding scheme?

Now, an application is in for temporary use which could deny the community access for years to come. However the councillors supported the campaigners and agreed to look at ways of resolving this issue rather than wait for a developer application then apply Community Infrastructure Levy based solutions and wait another decade wait. The Forum challenged them to resolve the issue unlike countless previous wasted Wandsworth Society led meetings and a request from the WVRP CEO. Our Councillors dutifully accepted and will report back asap.

Bruce St Julian-Bown. (Attended meeting)

Incinerator- It's not over yet!

The Viridor Beddington incinerator is not yet a done deal. Sasha Khan (SK), Merton Cllr David Dean, Derek Coleman and a score of 'Stop the Incinerator' campaigners including a borough councillor, representatives from local community groups and London Wildlife Trust, Beddington Forum and, assorted greens, local residents and members of the Wandle Valley Forum met on Sat Feb 7 in Wimbledon to consider the next steps.

SK is the local hero who has put his money where his conscience is – over £25k.

The legal basis of the case against the South London Waste Partnership (SLWP) incinerator's location adjacent to a regional park and high density population areas, according to the campaign group, is that Sutton Council erred in:

1. its interpretation of the South London Waste Plan
2. its consideration of "very special circumstances" of development on Metropolitan Open Land
3. the environmental impact assessment failing to assess the combined heat and power pipeline beyond the site boundary which covers the adjacent Felnex housing development, as an opportunity for waste heat to be used.

SK is currently appealing against the dismissal of his original appeal. If it fails he has 7 days to apply for an oral appeal. Future challenges will add to costs and a fighting fund is being set up.

Public confidence it seems was further undermined when air quality monitoring equipment was re-sited presumably to reduce recorded emissions. The Environment Agency should be the final arbiter of environmental security issues but is guided by parameters reflecting Government pressure to meet EU regulations on landfill and avoid fines. Whilst laudable in principle, it is seen very differently by local people concerned about their children's health.

Aspects discussed included:

- Leaked evidence that lorry movements have been grossly underestimated.
- The 'venting' of toxic emissions was allowed for a number of hours per week.
- Feed waste would need to be brought in from far afield adding to noise and tailpipe emissions of 600-700 lorries per day.
- Lorry drivers abusing public monitors.
- The short list of alternative sites was not transparent, independent or consulted on.
- Air quality monitoring equipment has been relocated to lower recorded emission sites
- Viridor's offer for additional equipment funded for 12 months only.
- Sutton Council's applications to build on Metropolitan Open Land.
- The implications of Felnex site not using waste heat.
- Reports of an explosion during commissioning of a similar incinerator (near Heathrow).
- Viridor's record of fulfilling, or not, its legal safety obligations and site management failings.
- Toxic plumes could affect areas from Croydon/Crystal Palace/Streatham and beyond.
- Greater awareness was essential and the Jeremy Irons film 'Trash' can help in that role

The article on leaked council papers in the Feb 19 Wimbledon Guardian also cast doubt on the future of the proposed incinerator. However the possibility of the current proposals collapsing brings the risk of new proposals with less stringent safeguards still. But In the meantime there other sources of light remain on this vexed issue.

FORUM COMMENT:

A huge facility such as this in an urban area next to a newly designated Regional Park inevitably puts many thousands of people at risk even if that risk is smaller than in the past. It also introduces a major building on protected open land in the heart of the Regional Park. For the sake of paying landfill fines for a few years more we support community demands for a fresh independent assessment on site location and technology choice. There should also be a more transparent process of decision making and data from vested interests should be independently evaluated.

Regional Park boundaries – what we know



Durnsford Rd Rec. confirmed in WVRP 1

Several Forum members have raised the subject of WVRP's boundaries, so we review what we know about them here. Council parks' officers or WVRP Trustees are welcome to contribute background information (in next issue). Beneficial boundary changes have already been made, demonstrating that change is possible.

Please note that although the WVRP Trust is the park's managing body, it does not own land and doesn't have the statutory powers of local councils in determining boundaries. It also has barely enough funding to undertake management (land owners maintain their open spaces) of the Regional Park organisation and activities.

Three boundary decisions we know have caused concern to Forum members. The first was the initial exclusion of Merton Priory and Abbey Mills Market which as a key cultural asset and visitor attraction is a prime Regional Park gateway. This has been rectified and therefore widens WVRP perceived accessibility - a good decision by Merton Council.

The second is in the Wimbledon Park area, where residents have long campaigned for access to the Wandle Trail from Durnsford Road Recreation Ground - just 150 yards from the river – **whose inclusion in the Regional Park has recently been confirmed**. There is also dismay that Wimbledon Park itself, with its Wandle tributary is omitted in spite of its proximity for reasons few local people understand.

Strategy evolution

Although a 'country park' had long been considered combining Mitcham Common & Beddington Farmlands the current WVRP concept developed out of the following initiatives:

- GLA London Plan 2005
- South London Partnership, 'Green Ribbon Initiative' (GRI) 2005
- Wandle Valley Steering Group "Vision for the Future" 2008 (EU SAUL funded)
- LDA Green Grid Area Framework 8, 2010 (2nd Ed 2014)

South London Partnership won funding to develop open space strategy in Wandle Valley, '*The Green Ribbon Initiative*' with an LWT/Groundwork project group. It became the precursor of today's Forum. (Forum member Angela Gorman was the Groundwork project leader and BSJB wrote the report).

The inspiration was based on the opportunity provided by the almost unbroken chain of parks and open spaces along the Wandle Valley and a recognition that they were under-utilized and some poorly managed in relation to local needs. The *Green Ribbon Initiative* first focussed on this potential.

All London Green Grid (Area Framework 8)

The GLA later published the Green Grid including the Wandle Valley (Area 8). Our report and the Green Grid, which the Forum insisted should include heritage assets, were published in 2010 as an archive of 85 potential Wandle Valley projects. The 2nd Edition (2014) updates their progress, and states the benefits of Regional Park designation as follows:

- coherent governance and oversight to the rich mix of landscapes within the Valley
- help in providing a strong identity and raise profile supporting fundraising initiatives
- establish a coherent approach to the maintenance and management
- offer greater support and protection to the valleys landscapes through the development of appropriate planning policies.

The document is downloadable from the London.Gov.UK (All London Green Grid) website here <http://bit.ly/1DKzWyl>

Reasons for different kinds of boundary

There can be different boundary lines for different purposes. For example: topography, river catchments, proximity and public access and also issues of governance, jurisdiction, funding and open space provision vis-a-vis population density. It seems likely that most of these were considered when drawing the public boundary and 'working' administrative boundaries.

Ivan Scott (WPRA - Wimbledon Park)) advocates a consistent policy regarding inclusion of types of space such as allotments and a defined area within which community groups such as resident associations and individuals can be part of a dialogue about needs and funding with the local authority (see case below). At present some allotments, cemeteries, sports grounds, parks and commons that are within the natural catchment are included, -- **but not all**. Ivan goes on to explain the benefits of the large catchment including the ease of identifying interested community groups even suggesting the park boundary should include the full urban catchment it serves.

Perceptions, Signage and Branding

Concerns about the need to clarify the new Park's name and boundary are relevant. The key issues of awareness and expectations are a factor. 'Wandle Valley' (the actual Park name as in "Lee Valley") is a collection of parcels of land owned by different bodies and has already benefited from many funding wins initiated by different Wandle Valley 'partners'.

The published boundary should create synergy over and above what existed already. After all what is the point of a new boundary line around existing, well used, open space unless it brings additional community benefits? Signage and branding have a key role to play here but are no substitute for improvement on the ground and of course are expensive to implement on their own. Although the WVRP has great branding graphics produced pro bono by a top design agency, in today's financial climate their application can only be funded for example, by HLF awards linked to improving access.

DeNica Fairman WPRA says:

I was deeply disappointed to find that the Wimbledon Park area has no green spaces attached to the WVRP. Despite the fact that Wimbledon Park itself is a Grade 2 Listed Capability Brown designed Heritage Park and has a tributary, Wimbledon Park Brook that flows directly into the Wandle from Wimbledon Park Lake. **How has this been allowed to happen?** In the 2010 GreenGrid Strategy the parks of Wimbledon & Wandsworth Commons were included in the WVRP which makes sense as huge expanses of Croydon's parklands are part of the WVRP. There were specific project recommendations such as Wimbledon Green Walkways and Improved Park/Industry Boundaries along the Durnsford Industrial Estate. Also a Wimbledon Park Primary School link is suggested along Durnsford Rec. These are all projects that the Wimbledon Park Residents Association has been trying to facilitate and campaign for over the last 20 years as the community has no access to the river at present. I quote from the 2010 ALGG: ***"Removing or overcoming obstacles to access to the Valley from neighbourhoods such as Wimbledon Park should be prioritised."*** How can we have gone from that to the present situation where NO parks are included within the boundary in the Wimbledon Park area and NO access projects are listed? Wimbledon Park itself is a mere 750 metres from the Wandle River and Durnsford Recreation Ground is only 150 metres with direct access to the river bank if the Public Rights of Way are re-opened and the huge metal railings (erected illegally) are taken down. It is

disgraceful that Merton Council have let down this half of the borough so appallingly. I feel very strongly that the WVF and the WVRP need to try to redress this imbalance as a matter of urgency!

DeNica Fairman, Secretary Wimbledon Park Residents Association (WPRA) Edited email.

FORUM COMMENT

Durnsford Road access to Wandle Trail

It seems obvious that Durnsford Road Recreation Ground (part of WVRP) is a potential access point for Southfields/Wimbledon Park residents, who currently have to walk a good distance to reach the Wandle Trail. A problem exacerbated by the Earlsfield Gap, which although being shortened approx 100m by Westfield House development's '106' agreement, the Trail is still blocked by the Waterloo mainline. These two issues compound each other but should be a funding priority. There have been meetings with sympathetic councillors and council officers but apart from acknowledging the problem the project, Phase 1 of which was only a feasibility study, has stalled. **The Forum fully backs any initiatives that progress this project.**

Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park

There are several reasons why Wimbledon Park should be part of the WVRP as detailed in DeNica's letter above. Although shown on the Green Grid maps it barely gets a mention in the report. This may be due to its Golf Club which Merton Council sold to the All England Lawn Tennis Club who may be nervous about the imposition of constraints if within the WVRP boundary. Perhaps Merton Council could enlighten us?

What added value does the 'Regional Park' bring?

The question, applicable to any piece of Regional Park is: what difference would it make if in, or out, of the WVRP? The short answer, is nuanced rather than obvious. The extra clout that a bigger body has in attracting funding - the WVRP gains another star heritage attraction. The evidence: Wandle Valley and its partners have done well in already winning several million pounds of awards. A larger park also improves the community 'offer' i.e. a greater park is more attractive and easier to promote to new visitors – a WVRP aim. However in real life terms a well-managed park remains a great asset in, or out, of the regional park. All significant if not very exciting for local residents in the short term.

The Lee Valley Precept

Ending precept funding is the obvious way to allow Wandle Valley an adequate funding lifeline. All the councils agree on this as do other landowners and the Forum. We should all continue our efforts to get this outdated legislation ditched as it results in depriving needy areas in south London whilst those north of the city still benefit from the Olympic legacy and vast economic regeneration. Meanwhile the park must benefit from the full, if modest, amount repatriated from Lee Valley's £11m income - a gesture perhaps to fend off precept revoking legislation. **BSJB**

£4 Million award to Canons, Mitcham

Another major HLF win for the Regional Park

Congratulations to the community groups working with Merton Council on being awarded nearly £4m from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the complete restoration of The Canons, a Grade II listed house, and the historic open spaces and former sports grounds which surround it. The Canons building dates back to 1681 making it an important heritage asset for Mitcham and the Wandle Valley Regional Park within whose boundary it is located. The success comes after years of efforts by Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage (MCGC&H), The Mitcham Society and Friends of the Canons to raise the profile of this historic area and pulling together a winning bid with Merton Council.

The plans include, restoring and opening up The Canons and Madeira Hall, sports activities as well as providing community facilities and a new café. The obelisk and the historic carp pond will also be restored and a programme of community events developed. The cinder running track where Dorothy Tyler, silver medalist at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, trained will be restored for informal use by joggers

and learner cyclists. A sensory garden, new wildlife pond and natural play area will also be created and the park will host food production, composting and rainwater harvesting projects. An initial award of over £300,000 has already been confirmed for individual project evaluation. Further information is available from MCGC&H at www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk

Hackbridge EcoPark Group – progress

The Ecology Park group has been meeting for over a year at the BedZed Pavilion. It has recently taken a step forward by being awarded a modest SIB (Social Investment Business Group) grant to enable progress to the next stage, a pre-feasibility study on what should happen to the Field North of BedZed (FNoB).

Following several stakeholder meetings the group (chair by Peter Alfrey) which includes:

BioRegional	Beddington Farmlands Bird Group,
WVRPT (CEO)	Hackbridge & BC Neighbourhood Development Group
London Wildlife Trust,	Hackbridge Neighbourhood Forum
Wandle Valley Forum,	Sutton Community Farm,
Conservation Science Grp	Sutton Council (officers / cllrs) other representatives,

will now be able to constitute itself formally, discuss asset transfer options with Sutton Council, survey gravel extraction and start formal consultation with the whole community. The ultimate aim is for the site to become a centre for every kind of healthy outdoor activity including habitat restoration and understanding of the environment.

Recently concerns were raised about Sutton Council's apparently long held competing aspirations for this land. They are keen to locate a much needed primary school on part of the site although it is part of Wandle Valley Regional Park and designated Metropolitan Open Land. Their school plans included an ecology study room - a concession perhaps? Originally the school was proposed on the small field adjacent to BedZed's easterly perimeter (now a children's play area) which is now safeguarded.

It is hoped that the outcome of any successful planning application will accommodate the EcoPark Group and community aspirations with a minimal area tarmacked or built on.

A 'Visioning meeting' is scheduled for 7th March. For more information see the Groups new website: hackbridgeecopark.weebly.com

Note: The 2nd Edition of the Green Grid Area Framework 8 has dropped the proposed Sutton's 'Sustainable' Neighbourhood" project, or at least the housing estate planned for the FNoB site, possibly after Forum and local people objected strongly to building on Metropolitan Open Land and part of a Regional Park.

A new 'Wandle riverside' stadium?

FORUM COMMENT

There are two competing developments for a new AFC Wimbledon football stadium with accompanying new residential estate has reared its head again - the large and the very large stadium. Wimbledon Park residents and some at the WVRP are concerned about the impact on Wandle Trail, its nature reserve and riverside. The Wandsworth Guardian story quotes AFC Wimbledon as saying their research shows there would be 5500 free parking spaces within a 2km radius. That should worry many communities as it encompasses Wimbledon town centre, Tooting town centre and Bellevue Rd village. The FA and football clubs are not famous for the accuracy of their research and this snippet appears more alarming than some of the other match attendance analysis figures quoted.

We would of course love to see the return of AFC Wimbledon – a club born of the fans desire to keep football alive in Wimbledon to its 'spiritual home in Plough Lane. (The original Wimbledon club moved to Milton Keynes as MK Dons). But (forgive the pun) the goal posts have moved considerably since their

phoenix-like rebirth. We hope that Merton and Wandsworth councils will work together to reassess the match day spectator impact whilst taking into account the real concerns of Wimbledon Park and all residents in proximity. Plough Lane is already a nightmare at several periods during the week – adding an 11,000 seat stadium possibly upgraded to 20,000 seats does seem hopelessly optimistic. We would also like to see measures that will safeguard residential tranquillity, the Wandle Trail and local patches of the Regional Park's landscape. We will monitor developments. **BSJB**

Speed Volunteering - TEAM WANDLE

Louise Crothall, LWLP Project Officer (Edited email.)

Team Wandle, a Groundwork project, is recruiting volunteers for speed / micro volunteering opportunities in the Wandle's 4 boroughs. It's part of Team London, run by the GLA. I wonder if you could promote this in your networks, or if you know of any opportunities that fit the bill that you would like us to help recruit volunteers for, just let the team know. Volunteering opportunities can be anything that meets these criteria:

Speed Volunteering makes help easier

- Each opportunity takes less than 6 hours to complete.
- The opportunity is intended to be 'one-off' in nature. (Although volunteers can re-engage if they wish to, it is intended that people are able to engage as a one off if they wish).
- The opportunity can be available at short-notice
- There are no significant barriers to volunteering i.e. significant paperwork or DBS checks to be completed (although organisations may choose to offer speed volunteering opportunities to registered DBS checked volunteers).

We just need a basic description of the activity, and the time and date if it's a specific date.

Some examples of opportunities: stewarding at an event, helping with a community consultation, tree planting, cooking a meal at a festive lunch for older people. Opportunities can also be 'virtual', for example someone completing a spreadsheet, updating a website, doing some online research for a history project.

If organisations think they'd like to use speed-volunteering but aren't sure of what opportunities they could offer they can always get in touch and we can chat it through. Benefits are - a massive pool of volunteers with a wide variety of skills. Some may be working full time and just want to offer a Saturday, others may have free time but just don't want to make a long term commitment. Some may be looking to volunteer more regularly and using the speed volunteering as a taster.

Interested? Please get in touch at teamwandle@volunteeringwandsworth.org.uk or Tel: 0300 3659950

Mitcham Common ponds fish destocking?

The latest edition of Magpie, the excellent newsletter of Friends of Mitcham Common, explains a dilemma for local people and piscators (fishing enthusiasts). We pick it up here as those beyond the Magpie's circulation area may have already found a solution. The dilemma is: in order to avoid anti-social behaviour including camp fire lighting amongst some elements of the casual fishing fraternity, should the fish be taken out of the ponds – i.e. the destocking option. So is it to be: no fish and therefore no incentive for naughtiness or, fishing for all and some acceptance of negative consequences.

So might a combination of social psychologists and Wandle Trusts piscatorial expertise help find a solution? Perhaps a night time recruiting



campaign for likely lads to become common litter picking volunteers who can then regain their confiscated rods after a clean-up session! Levity aside this is a serious issue which erodes the pleasure that the Common provides – so ideas please to the Editor for publication or direct to friendsofmitchamcommon@gmail.com

Green infrastructure: a growing priority

Merton privatising & Wandsworth merging Parks Departments

Are our parks safe?

The hundreds of signatures gathered in Merton prior to a public meeting petitioning against Council's plans to privatise parks and waste management are indicative of two things: the financial constraints all local authorities are under and people's passion for protecting valued open space. But there is a third that is equally important.

Since the London Plan 2004 and Green Grid, parks have been recognised as essential infrastructure for healthy societies. With nearly a third of the population approaching obesity access to open space for exercise and sport has never been more critical. This should push parks up the priority rankings rather than being regarded as low hanging fruit.

And people are right to be anxious about the privatisation as parks are difficult to monitor and staff experience and caring is critical. Local bird watching groups are concerned that Sutton council for example is finding it difficult to maintain a secure perimeter round Beddington Farmlands.

Sutton and Merton councils could work together on park maintenance, including parks, arboriculture and grass verges as part of the South London Waste Partnership. But Tree Warden, Jane Plant reportedly said: "Something as major as this should be widely consulted on. Time should be given to get it right if it does go ahead. The Council is throwing parks management away with waste and litter."

Dan Goode, founder of litter campaign group Merton Matters, said: "The idea that volunteers will pick up the slack from a company protecting its own profits is laughable. Parks should be secured for future generations - this doesn't make any sense at all."

Merton Council Cabinet member Judy Saunders said: "The SLWP has huge experience in procuring contracts and will get the best deal for all our partners and tax-payers too. The partnership will commission environmental service specialists from 2017 to carry out waste collections and keep parks clean. The government continues to reduce local authority funding so we will have to save £32m over four years."

Opposition Cllr Dean is reported as saying that Merton Council is "making a monumental mistake in hiving off the borough's park maintenance to SLWP. Clearly, this organisation has no experience and will make a complete hash of one of the stand-out reasons for living in Merton; our gorgeous parks. The fact that nearly 500 have signed a petition in six days shows the strength of feeling of residents."

Wandsworth have just announced their Parks Department merger in 2017 with Richmond. It will be headed by Richmond, and initially will not involve a redundancy programme. However there are long term concerns for both employment resulting in further cost savings and the knock on effect of park management quality.

BSJB Based on information published on the web.

Protection & improvement of open spaces is major issue

The Government's cuts to local authorities for our local public services, combined with the lack of statutory protection for open spaces, are causing most of the problems we are facing. So please sign and promote the UK 'Save Our Parks' petition to step up the pressure on the Government and all political parties to take seriously the future funding and protection of our vital green spaces.

Parks Petition webpage: www.natfedparks.org.uk/parks-petition.html And please don't forget to

support your local green space Friends Group or help set up one for any green space without one!

Dave Morris, Campaigns Officer
National Federation of Parks and Green Spaces

Old Rectory, Carshalton, to be sold.

Jean Knight of Friends of Carshalton Water Tower writes: London Borough of Sutton are wishing to sell off the Old Rectory in Carshalton, just next to Honeywood in Festival Walk, to property developers! We have started to get our act together and a website should be online in a week. We will have posters distributed and hope to get a petition out very soon.

Jean Knight

Watermeads restoration starts to take shape

Memo from Peter Wilkinson project leader

The works which form part of the Wandle Valley Big Green Fund (WVBGF) project are going pretty well and are due to be completed by the end of April.

As part of the project we have a small amount of funding to produce a 'next steps' plan for Poulter Park - to be called the **Poulter Park Development Plan**.

This plan will capture aspirations for further improvements to the park that would build on the progress made under WVBGF. The plan will also embrace management and maintenance of the Park's new infrastructure once it is handed over by our contractor.

To take this work forward we have asked Land Use Consultants (who are the landscape architects leading the main Big Green Fund works contract) to lead two stakeholder workshops, that together are intended to capture the views and needs of targeted local groups and residents. *I should emphasise that our limited resources don't extend to holding a full public consultation to support the drafting of the plan.*

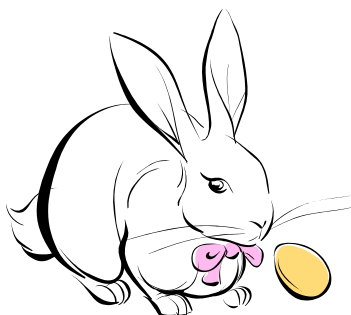
I am therefore writing to invite you to attend our first planning workshop which will be held at the Tooting and Mitcham Utd 'Hub' on Tuesday 3rd March - between 6.00-8.30pm in the function room. If you would like to attend, and/or would like to suggest someone else who is interested in the future of the park and would like to join us, please get in touch. I would be grateful if you could get back to me by **Wednesday 25th February**. It is important that we can anticipate the numbers of people attending for catering purposes, but also to organise the break out groups. If you have any questions please get in touch.

Best wishes.

Peter Wilkinson

Wandle at Watermeads reach by Poulter Park from Bishopsford Rd Bridge Mitcham





Melanie's Spring/Summer Walks 2015

Date	Meeting place/time	Walk description	Distance
Sat 14 Mar	Mitcham Junction 2 pm	Walk around Mitcham Common	3-4 easy
Fri 3 April (Good Friday)	St Mary's Church 10 am (see below)	A walk from Beddington Park to Mitcham Common. We will take the path along the Beddington Farmlands path (about 45 mins and could be muddy!). Refreshments available at Mitcham Golf Club. £2.50 tea/coffee/cake. Return to St Mary's Church afterwards or public transport from Mitcham Junction. Please call or email to book.	2-3 miles, easy, but one stile!
Sat 9 May	Mitcham Junction 2 pm	Wandle Walk along the Beddington Farmlands path to Beddington Park and Carshalton. We return to Mitcham Junction via the Wandle Trail with a visit to Wilderness Island. Coffee stop on the way.	5-6 miles, easy
Sun 7 June	Church Road Tram Stop, Croydon 9.10 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.	4-5 miles, linear

For all walks starting at Mitcham Junction meet at bus stop on bridge.

Sutton Healthy Walks - 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. Voluntary contribution to church funds. Tour of church possible.



After the walk on Friday 6 March there will be a celebration to mark the official accreditation of the Beddington Park walk as a Sutton Healthy Walk!!

Merton Health Walk – Join Cathy or Liz for a walk around **Mitcham Common** every Thursday. Meet at 11 am Mitcham Junction Station. Refreshments afterwards at Mitcham Golf Club. For other health walks in Merton please visit www.merton.gov.uk/walk4life.

Bird and Wildlife Walk at Beddington Farmlands

Sunday 21 June - 2 or 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 to book.**

Please note that several of the above walks are on the Sutton & Wandle Valley Ramblers' programme but all are welcome. If you would like to be on the mailing list for this list and/or for the Ramblers' programmes please email me on mlnunuzet@gmail.com. Please note the second letter is an 'l' not 'i'! Any other queries please call 07944 833605.

Thank you and happy walking!

Melanie

Green Valley concept gains a new star asset

We don't often congratulate a shopping mall but make an exception for **Southside Shopping Centre** which sits on top of the River Wandle in Wandsworth town centre. In spite of its unfortunate obliteration of our beloved river it has won an environmental award for cutting electricity consumption by 23% over 2 years. The Silver award is sponsored by the London Business Energy Challenge Award scheme. This adds strength to the Forum green energy concept for the Wandle Valley. There are now nearly a dozen prime examples of major carbon saving energy projects from the BedZed Estate to Morden Hall Park Green Energy demonstration centre to be seen in the Wandle Valley. **BSJB**

Progress in the Park

Projects by Wandle Valley Regional Park Trust / Wandle Trust / Borough Councils/ Living Wandle Landscape Partnership & Wandle Valley partners, completed or are in progress

- Poulter Park large scale enhancement
- Bennets Hole
- Merton Priory, constructing new museum
- Catchment Plan detailing biodiversity strengthening strategy
- Bridge to Nowhere, now somewhere
- Watermeads, opening up closed wilderness to managed public access
- Spencer Road Wetlands, board walk renewal & managed public access
- Morden Hall Park Green Energy Demo Centre
- Morden Hall Park working Archimedes Screw
- Wandle Trail upgrades & cycle routes
- Half tide weir removal at mouth of broken gate
- Beddington Park Churchyard restoration
- Water Vole Reintroduction
- Improved river flow project to minimise silting
- Waddon Ponds improved feature design and access
- Wandle Park Croydon, de-culvert & complete redesign and resculpt
- Morden Hall Park Wetlands Boardwalk
- Honeywood Museum Carshalton refurbishment
- Colliers Wood Master plan landscape and access improvements
- King Georges Park Enhanced design & Management Plan
- Education & outreach programmes
- Environment and climate change projects
- 4 major gateway projects
- Approx £5m awarded from HLF & BGF funding for a range of schemes

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

Email wandlevalleyforum@gmail.com

Website <http://www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk/The-Trust/The-Trust-Forum>

We're on twitter (@WandleValley) and Facebook

