



# Minutes

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## Merton Heritage Forum

Tuesday 16 October 2018

Merton Heritage Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Morden Library, Merton Civic Centre

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### Present:

Cllr Nick Draper ( Chair ), Cllr Mark Kenny, Cllr Geraldine Stanford,  
 Cllr Dickie Guy; Norman Plastow ( Wimbledon Society & Wimbledon Windmill )  
 John Veale ( John Innes Society ); Tony Scott ( Merton Historical Society )  
 John Hawks and Cyril Maidment ( Merton Priory Trust )  
 Tony Burton, John Strover and Caroline Muller-Carpent ( MCGC&H )  
 Chris Baker ( Capability Brown Society )  
 Duncan Rabagliati ( Wool Rd & Drax Avenue Conservation Area )  
 Anthony Hopkins ( LBM ), Sarah Gould ( Minutes ), Alison Plant and Jill Tyndale  
 ( LBM )

### Apologies:

Joyce Bellamy, John Davis

| Item   | Actions |
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| <p><b>Minutes and Matters arising:</b></p> <p><b>1. Merton Heritage Forum – terms of reference.</b><br/>           For the benefit of new Forum members AH went through the terms ( see attachment.) These are guided by the council’s constitution and meetings are included in the annual diary. Members of the public are also welcome to attend Forum meetings. The Forum produces and works to the Merton Heritage Strategy 2015-20; the associated action plan underpins the forum and is open to review and amendment as required. The current Heritage Strategy is due for review in 2019/20. Council and community groups are encouraged to add projects to the document. Key objectives include developing partnerships and collective activity.</p> <p>GS – reminded the group that for a borough with considerable heritage, Merton has limited staffing capacity. This has now been reduced further to 1fte heritage officer and 1 pte Future Merton officer. ND – additional funding is needed to extend resources – however at present this can only come from external sources.</p> <p><b>2. Merton Priory Chapterhouse - update.</b> JH – for over 30 years the Priory Chapterhouse has been a chrysalis but it has finally emerged as some sort of</p> |         |

butterfly. Public outcry prevented the site from being backfilled as part of the original Sainsbury's development. A judicial review forced the construction of Merantun Way as a bridge in order to protect the historic remains below. Sainsbury's provided less financial support than expected so subsequent access to/ maintenance of the Chapterhouse has taken place on a shoestring budget. After the transfer of the site to Countryside Properties £355,000 was provided from Section 106 funding and the Chapterhouse land was transferred to Merton council.

Following the formation of Merton Priory Trust, architect Marcus Beale was appointed to devise a renovation scheme for the historic remains. A wall at the side of the chapterhouse has been replaced with glazing and services to the site have been upgraded. £200,000 was secured from a bid to the Living Wandle Project and architects were appointed to design a Priory visitor centre. Costly fees meant that the development was delayed by a further four years, until Marcus Beale took on the project, working on a pro bono basis.

Building work was completed in May 2018. The site was remodelled and opened to visitors with a successful launch in September. The chapterhouse centre will be closed over the winter, reopening in the spring to allow for completion of the first phase. There have been issues affecting the connection of utility service but JH hopes these will soon be resolved.

Phase II will involve the creation of a modern museum, with interactive displays and a herb garden on the former site of the infirmary cloister. The Priory Trust will undertake regular reviews and consider means of attracting more visitors, highlighting the educational value and community significance of the site. Income will continue to be generated from use of the site as performance space, with plans for an improved entrance and lighting. The space can also be hired for public events, including use of the new kitchen area. The Priory Trust will work towards Sunday opening and events such as London Open House.

ND and Forum members congratulated JH and Marcus on the success of this project and their major contribution to the work. ND – this is just the beginning – it will be great for young people to be able to see and experience the new centre and its facilities.

TSc praised the excellent Chapterhouse displays but raised concerns about the potential effect of environmental problems. JH – MPT is currently using temporary boards with heavy lamination. More can be produced as money is forthcoming.

### **3. The Canons Project - update.**

AP gave the group an introduction to and update on the Canons project which she manages, assisted by Community Engagement Officer, Hannah Shimko. ( See attached presentation. ) A Parks for People project, this is being funded by a £4.4million grant from HLF and the Big Lottery Fund. AP is based with the Future Merton team and Hannah is a p/t officer.

As part of the transformation of Canons House more office space will be available for commercial hire. There will also be community space, a new café and a courtyard area for public use.

The project team has already taken part in Mitcham Heritage Day and has staged events including a garden party and open day. The project has been supported by the Friends of the Canons, Wandle Trust and Will Hardy, the designer from "George Clarke's Amazing Spaces."(Channel 4)

Hannah has experience in Open Space event management. Her work will include looking at what the Canons building can tell us about its history. There will also be a range of community engagement projects using the new visitor centre and dovecote, educational projects, an archaeological dig, a Wandle trail and playground workshop.

Development plans for the Canons include the creation of a play area, with part of the overflow car park being used to create more space. Parking will also be addressed with better provision for the Leisure Centre (the same number of parking spaces but in an expanded area.) There will also be more disabled parking bays and new cycle bays.

JH asked if, as part of the transport aspect of the wider project, there would be more signage, including directions to other attractions. AP confirmed that there was planning for additional signage.

ND thanked MCGC&H, the Friends of the Canons and the project officers for their work and involvement with the project to date.

There is also the possibility of the project involving archaeological exploration in the local area. AP – the Listed building work includes archaeology. TB referred to planned sessions involving Cricket Green School on 25 October, with support from MOLS archaeologist Dave Saxby.

#### **4. Additions to the local list..**

JT – the revised local list is now online and up to date. A house trough on Cottenham Park Road seems to be missing – has this been demolished?

NP – a trough was moved to the Wimbledon Common area – he suggested contacting the Commons Ranger for more information.

JT – there have been queries re. the Burn Bullock pub ( Mitcham ) - the roof has been fixed but the order notice has not been discharged as there are ongoing problems. There is no update on the White Hart ( Mitcham ) – there has been some unauthorised rendering – this will be taken up with the enforcement officer.

JT has replied to a Madeira Road enquiry on behalf of the planning enforcement officer, to confirm there is no permitted development.

Re: Brook House, Mitcham – estate agent boards have been installed as part of permitted development.

TB – there are too many boards being displayed by too many organisations. As more flats are constructed in Mitcham pressure from estate agents to promote their services is growing. The council needs to take steps to address this before problems occur.

**JT to contact  
Commons Ranger**

JT reminded the group about the constraints on council services.

JT – The Bank Buildings – this has not been listed by Historic England and a Wimbledon Hill hotelier has suggested redevelopment. The public are keen for statutory listing of this site but this has been refused – there is little that Merton council can do beyond local listing.

Re: The installation of Tommy silhouettes as part of the Great War centenary – work is progressing on the installation of items in Mitcham but planning permission and Listed Buildings consent is now required.

TB – the silhouettes will be bolted to the ground. MVSC, local councillors and Carol Warren have applied for funding to install Tommies near Vestry Hall and the local war memorial.

Following JT's update, ND asked CN to give an update re. the newly formed Capability Brown Society. This was founded in response to a successful event held in and around the historic Wimbledon Park as part of Brown's tercentenary in 2016. Ownership and use of the park itself is divided between the council, the AELTC, the Wimbledon Club and Wimbledon Park Golf Club. A wide range of sports clubs use the park for everything from hockey, golf, and tennis to volleyball, cycling and angling. It is also extensively used by the local community for leisure activities.

In 2018 the CB Society and the Friends of Wimbledon Park staged a community family sports and arts day. 6 sports clubs ran special sessions in the park, with particular attention given to activities for young people. There was also an art exhibition celebrating the park and its fine vistas – this involved the Art department at St. Catherine's School and Kings College School.

The CB Society has been set up as a charitable trust to highlight the life and work of Brown, his links to Wimbledon and to create a legacy following the extensive tercentenary celebrations. The Society is particularly keen to gather enthusiasts and stage an annual Capability Brown day – this would be a focus for CBr experts and representatives from CBr landscaped properties around the UK, as well as a means of celebrating Wimbledon Park and raising awareness of Brown's work. CB is looking for an initial historic infrastructure project – this may involve restoration of an historic 300m long dam in the park – this needs strengthening and little is known of Brown's engineering process in this area. The Society will fundraise to support this work and to stage sports events in Wimbledon Park to boost employment and wellbeing.

DR asked about the impact of the sale of the local golf club land to the AELTC. CB – this will not affect the historic C Br Views – in fact support from the AELTC is likely to benefit the work of the society.

DR spoke about barriers affecting some of the park vistas – removal would be subject to planning applications but it is important for the historic landscape to remain as unspoilt as possible.

CB – the AELTC paid for railings along Church Road to allow the public a better view of the landscape – the club has also assisted in the care and maintenance of the local environment.

ND thanked CB for the efforts of the society to date and emphasised the need to shout about the importance of Brown’s Wimbledon Park.

CB – Membership of the CB Society is free (See attached form.)  
He encouraged Forum members to sign up and spread the word about the society, as he is keen to build its strength and influence.

### **5. Summary of Merton’s First World War Commemorations.**

SG gave the group a summary of the borough’s First World War centenary commemorations. ( See attached bulletpoint list. ) These ranged from large public events with military and civic representatives, to Remembrance Services and projects involving local schools. The Heritage Service has done considerable work to raise awareness of Merton’s First World War heritage and the sacrifices made by local combatants through the HLF funded Carved in Stone project. SG has derived particular satisfaction from the amount of joint work and reciprocal support between the Heritage Service and local stakeholders / heritage organisations – 30 have taken part in the project from church groups and museums, to local history societies, the Peace Pledge Union and the Red Cross.

Helped by a great team of community volunteers, the CIS project has staged special events to record previously unknown family war stories, held screenings of the historic “Battle of the Somme” film; staged guided walks, produced school resource packs and supported acts of commemoration at local churches, schools and community venues. The project team has also made a wealth of historic material available online with the help of organisations such as Kings College School, Rutlish School and the Museum of Wimbledon. SG would like to thank all the community groups and individuals who have helped the project team over the past four years.

SG is particularly proud of the work her team has done to raise awareness of the life stories of local combatants and to secure commemorative stones for two local VCs – George Cates ( Wim ) and William White ( Mit.) This work has been widely praised and the Heritage Service has received some wonderful emails/ verbal feedback from the descendants of combatants ( both in this country and ex-pats in Canada, Australia and the USA. )

Work on CIS is ongoing as the Heritage team is keen to produce profiles for as many local combatants as possible. SG is also part of the council team planning the final “Battle’s Over” commemoration at Merton Civic Centre on 11 November. This will feature readings, a children’s choir, a special slideshow, the lighting of a beacon and a community “peal for peace.”

ND congratulated the Heritage team on the work undertaken by the CIS project team – this has been very worthwhile and an excellent example of partnership work.

## **6. Merton Heritage Service – 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

SG gave the group a brief description of plans to mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Merton Heritage Centre ( 23 April 2019. ) - see attached draft list. She is planning a wide range of activities to take place between May and December, starting with the annual Heritage Discovery Day – this will be even bigger than last year's event.

A planning meeting will be held for stakeholders in the new year but SG would like to hear from local heritage and community groups who would like to run workshops, give talks or have stalls on the day.

The anniversary programme will feature events across the borough and SG is also keen to support other heritage organisations with their projects / work on joint events. In addition to the standard exhibition programme, SG is looking to stage half-hour lunchtime learning sessions; monthly history skills workshops, guided walks, reminiscence sessions, author events linked to Wimbledon Bookfest, a heritage craft fair, film interviews about life during World War II, stage a volunteer reunion event, assorted local history talks and a giant Merton montage display featuring artwork supplied by local people. There will also be initiatives aimed at increasing service usage by local schools and the provision of additional services for day care centres and people living with dementia.

## **7. AOB**

NP – queried if there has been any progress regarding the transfer of Wandle Industrial Museum to Ravensbury Mill.

ND – There is nothing further to add to the section 106 agreement – the owner is resident in Spain and there has been little communication from him on this subject. JH – reiterated that if a suitable lease is provided, the museum will sign it. The current impasse is connected to disagreements regarding restoration of the millwheels. The mill pond has been allowed to silt up and the wheels will now no longer turn. Dredging will cost £300,000 -400,000 so the museum has not been able to make any progress on this matter.

NP – The Museum of Wimbledon was one of the first to secure museum accreditation. It now has support from museum professionals working on placements whilst studying. Pamela Greenwood has been working on the new accreditation requirements and has managed to get considerable help from student volunteers.

Wimbledon Windmill – the Commons Conservators are keen to coordinate public services – previously there has been little overlap between the stables, the museum and the café. Things are now improving and the various teams are working together.

ND – Following on from this example - Mitcham Historical Society does not have a venue – there could be potential to use the Priory Chapterhouse for joint work (?).

NP – asked if there could be more frequent Heritage Forum meetings?

AH – the reduction in the number of meetings was due to budgetary issues and pressures on staffing capacity.

**Forum members to contact SG if they would like to be involved in the Discovery Day or any of the Merton25 anniversary events.**

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| <p>DR – reminded the group that NP had referred to potential restoration of the historic transformer structure at Sunnyside ( supported by the Wimbledon Society ) but no further progress had been made.</p> <p>NP – will follow this up – no work can be done without the permission of the owner. JT confirmed that the structure is owned by one of the electricity boards.</p> <p>The recent Civic Voice War Memorial conference asked for more war memorials to be added to the current list. Members of the public can contact the War Memorials Trust to register additional structures. The Trust has been approached for funding to clean and repair the memorial on Lower Green west and the surrounding railings. T Sc – the original in-fill of the lettering on the memorial has been lost – it may have been lead. No repairs have been done to reinstate the lettering since 1962.</p> <p>TB – the future of Mitcham Cricket Club and Pavilion is under threat following a development proposal to turn the Burn Bullock pub into a hotel – this is not yet at the planning approval stage. There have been problems establishing a dialogue with the owner. Creation of a hotel would need agreement from local residents and a building with community access / benefits.</p> <p>As part of the planning process a condition of planning consent should be restoration of the Burn Bullock, a secure future for the cricket club and continued match-play on the green. There needs to be planning confidence – TB would be grateful for political support – this matter needs to be resolved with the right kind of outcome for the local community.</p> <p>CM – the new Wimbledon Plan was circulated 2 days ago – this is quite radical in content. The council is under pressure to complete everything by the end of March without much time for any serious consultation.</p> <p>ND – it may be possible to discuss capacity issues regarding the local plan for Merton at a future meeting.</p> <p>DG asked if the extension of Tramlink was part of the plan – there appear to be three options for this. ND encouraged Forum members to respond to the draft local plan and make their opinions known.</p> <p>GS – a lot of information has been sent out by officers regarding the public consultation. CMC – here have been a number of complaints regarding the availability of planning information on the Merton website.</p> | <p><b>NP to follow up with Wimbledon Society</b></p> <p><b>ND to raise this with the Leader of the council.</b></p> |
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**Date of next meeting: 7 – 8.30pm, 15 October 2019, Merton Heritage Centre, Morden Library**