

WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM
25 SEPTEMBER 2019

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at the Wimbledon Arts Space, and chaired by Councillor David Dean, as Councillor Holmes was unwell. Twelve residents attended, as well as five other Merton Councillors. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, introducing the councillors present at the meeting.

2 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 2)

A resident commented on the roll out of 20 Mph speed limits, and suggested they would only be of any use if being enforced. They suggested that the sequencing of traffic lights could be used to restrict speed. Councillor Alambritis said the plan to roll out 20 mph limits was in keeping with other boroughs, and would improve road safety. Traffic lights are the responsibility of Transport for London so we could raise this with them.

A resident asked about charging for bulky waste. Councillor Alambritis said that bulky waste collection was free for number of years but was not being used as much as we would have liked and did not help reduce fly tipping. Merton Council had to make tough choices due to reduced Government funding and this was one of those.

A resident asked about yellow box junction with ANPR cameras being used Western Road Wimbledon and Armfield Crescent Mitcham. Their view was that these were not helping traffic and the junctions would be better served by a mini-roundabout. Councillor Alambritis agreed to pass on roundabout idea to officers but explained that yellow box junctions are there to keep traffic flow moving and have to meet national standards. All fines go back into transport related projects, for example the Freedom pass.

A resident asked if mini-roundabouts could be a bigger obstruction to ensure vehicles went round them instead of over. Kris Witherington, Merton Council, said mini-roundabouts tended to be used in smaller junctions so had to allow for larger vehicles to be able to pass over them.

A resident asked about a change to the Planning Applications Committee where speakers would be limited to 6 minutes limit per item change. Councillor Dean said that all Councils have to meet deadlines for assessing applications so the change was designed to get more items through in each meeting.

A resident said that weeds on the streets of the All Saints estate have not been cleared. Kris Witherington agreed to raise this with the Neighbourhood Client Team. UPDATE following the meeting: The team has confirmed that the roads are Merton Council's responsibility and will be inspecting the streets for weeds and litter.

A resident asked about leaf clearing. Councillor Alambritis said the contract with Veolia is to keep roads clear of leaves and there is a 10-week period where additional resources are brought into Merton. Councillor Dead said he arranges for the local community to help with leaf clearing in Dundonald Ward.

A resident asked if that following the success of Car Free Sunday it would be possible to make streets more family friendly. Councillor Dean suggested residents contacted their councillors for advice or they can start a petition to demonstrate support amongst their neighbours.

Sgt Marcia Heritage from Merton Police provided an update on local issues. She said that the Safer Neighbourhood Teams have been working hard to address some of the rough sleeps, aggressive begging which has improved. About half are genuine homeless and referred to the specialist service ([SPEAR](#)) covering the borough or the London wide [StreetLink](#). There was a traffic operation on Hartfield Road tonight to look at freight use. There has been a recent batch of thefts of number plates from cars in the area so SNTs were providing anti-tamper screws. Sgt Heritage was asked about squatters in the former Barclays building and explained that they were waiting for the building's owner to take out a court order.

3 CLIMATE EMERGENCY (Agenda Item 3)

Katie Halter, Climate Officer for Merton Council informed residents about the Climate Emergency unanimously declared by the Council in July.

The declaration requires the borough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Data from National Statistics indicate that Merton was responsible for emitting over half a million tonnes of greenhouse gases in 2018. Gas and electricity used in Merton's buildings, and the use of petrol and diesel transport were mainly responsible; although the greenhouse emissions estimated could potentially double if you include activities outside of Merton by residents, such as flying.

There are three specific commitments in declaration

1. Specific dates to reduce emissions – Merton Council carbon neutral by 2030; the borough as a whole by 2050. This means 12% annual reduction to achieve this, which implies the decarbonisation of around 3000 properties improved a year and 2,500 of the 75,000 petrol and diesel cars registered in Merton will need to be replaced by electric or active travel per year.
2. Create a Climate Emergency Action Plan by March 2020
3. Create a Climate Emergency Working group to gather evidence and ideas, which will contribute to the formation of the Action Plan.

For more information on the Climate emergency declaration, please see:
<https://www.merton.gov.uk/planning-and-buildings/sustainability-and-climate-change/climate-emergency>

Katie set out how residents could get involved

- Individual choices are critical – especially energy use, diet, and travel. [Sustainable Merton](#) has a helpful [checklist](#)
- Community Projects – the Council would like to support setting them up or hearing about them
- Climate action plan – please get involved in the consultation on the action plan when it begins, we welcome new ideas
- Climate Strike protests tomorrow – national policies have a huge impact so welcome pressure on politicians.
- [Solar Power Together leaflets](#) – run by Mayor of London – they have vetted solar panel providers through collective bargaining power. Depending on how many sign up they will agree a supplier who will conduct a survey and agree a final price. Last year got 35% discount and they had good feedback on installations.
- Plant more trees as they act as a carbon store

A resident asked about the use of Hexane gas and Katie explained that moving away from gas use was a key part of reducing emissions. In response to other questions, Katie said that they are working with Merton's Young Advisers programme to develop education programme; there are many issues that are outside the control of the Council so we welcome ideas to change behaviours. Katie also said that there would be provisions in the new Local Plan to help reduce emissions; and we will be working with developers, including Clarion, as well as scrutinising planning applications. Katie also explained that energy use as whole roughly breaks down as 50% gas, 25% electric, 25% cars across Merton and that housing stock is only 5% new build so the bigger issue is bringing existing homes to standard.

Katie also said that Merton Council has an open space strategy being considered currently, and will address the need to balance the use of these spaces including the potential to increase the tree canopy. Katie agreed to look into the impact of road humps. A resident asked about Heathrow expansion and Councillor Alambritis

confirmed that Merton Council is against the expansion and had responded to the consultation to say so.

Questions were asked about trams and train frequencies, Councillor Alambritis said we can raise with TfL as demand is high and that we are keen to expand the Tram from Wimbledon to Sutton. A resident also suggested lobbying to reduce the tax on electric cars company cars.

4 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL (Agenda Item 4)

Councillor Alambritis provided an anonymous case study of a 93-year-old man who lives independently but on his own. After a fall, he was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Merton Council's Reablement team has worked with the resident to create a Reablement Plan including four visits a day, with new equipment to make his home accessible, a MASCOT alarm, and referred him to Age UK Merton for support. The resident is now regaining his confidence attending Wimbledon Guild to reduce his isolation. 45% of Merton Council controllable income goes on Adult Social Care and also supports groups like Wimbledon Guild and the Warm and Well project.

Merton Council has also decided to keep all libraries open, with a new library in Colliers Wood. Wimbledon is the busiest in borough with more than 200,000 visitors to Arts Space last year. 95% of schools in Merton are good or outstanding and a new secondary school in South Wimbledon is already oversubscribed. Four of our care leavers went on to University this year. Merton Council is looking at how we support students with special needs and lobbying the government to help fund this work. You can get involved in the [consultation](#) before 16 October.

A Brexit Task Group is looking at the implications especially of a no deal Brexit, and is meeting monthly. We have also updated our Risk Register and have been supporting EU residents in Merton to access Settled Status, through funding a support worker at Merton and Lambeth CAB based in Morden. We are also monitoring Hate Crime incidents and looking at challenge for social care in terms of recruiting staff.

In response to questions about the case study Councillor Alambritis reiterated that 45% of controllable income goes on adult social care and the pressure on all local authorities is immense. Grants can be accessed to support residents and the Reablement Team would assess the needs of each individual.

A resident raised the issue of the role of volunteers and cuts to voluntary organisations. Councillor Alambritis said that volunteers are essential to keeping libraries and we thank them for their contribution. Merton Council faces a lot of tough choices but is working closely with the voluntary sector and investing more than £1m

in organisations like Wimbledon Guild and Age UK. We work with Merton Voluntary Service Council to attract and support volunteers.

A resident raised the issue of Air Quality at the Harris location in South Wimbledon and called for Air Quality testing at the site. Councillor Alambritis said that the site went through the planning process as well as being scrutinised by DfES, ESFA, and Mayor of London. There is a challenge in building any school in London, as air quality is generally poor but we would be happy to look monitoring and mitigation. The new school will have access to the Rutlish Foundation playing fields across the road but Councillor Alambritis was happy to raise the idea of a rooftop playing space with Harris.

5 DATE OF NEXT MEETING (Agenda Item 5)

Councillor Dean thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Future meetings: all 7.15pm in Wimbledon Arts Space
Tuesday 3 December 2019; Thursday 26 March 2020