

WIMBLEDON COMMUNITY FORUM
19 MARCH 2024

(7.15 pm - 9.00 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Paul Kohler (in the Chair),

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

The meeting was held at the Arts Space, Wimbledon Library and chaired by Councillor Paul Kohler. 25 residents and three councillors attended. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained how the meeting would work.

2 LOVE WIMBLEDON UPDATE (Agenda Item 2)

Craig Hurring provided an update on the work of Love Wimbledon, the Business Improvement District for Wimbledon town centre. The slides from his presentation are attached to this report.

The Time and Leisure Food and Culture awards for Southwest London took place on 18 March and Wimbledon had five overall winners, with 12 others highly commended.

Footfall in Wimbledon in 2023 has increased by 16.4% compared to 2022 and is higher than pre-pandemic levels. Whilst footfall across London and nationally is down, Wimbledon has bucked these trends. This is possibly due to the doughnut effect of more people working from home in the borough but holding events has helped. Tracking Mastercard transactions also shows that spend was higher in 2023 than in previous six years, for both weekday and weekends. Even allowing for changes in cash use this is a positive sign. Increased footfall is across all days, especially when the market is on.

Love Wimbledon's Ranger service checks for issues like littering, fly-tipping, graffiti. Over 3000 incidents were reported in 2023 and resolved either by Love Wimbledon, London Borough Merton or others.

Love Wimbledon continues to provide support to businesses through networking, training, and information events. Street markets have returned on the first weekend of every month. Love Wimbledon is also testing potential new vendors. Big screen tennis will be back for the tennis but there will be a wider summer of sport including the Olympics and the Tour De France. Sustainable Summer event last year went well

and will return this year. Love Wimbledon is also planning for the Winterfest event, and it will once again be on Queens Road. There will be an Evolving Wimbledon conference on 1 October.

The Wilko site is currently under offer. Two new businesses have opened at 27 Broadway, a gym and Korean supermarket. Two new businesses are opening in Wimbledon Quarter including children's soft play and Huddle co-worker hub opens June 2024. At 247 Broadway the office premises are nearly finished, and Love Wimbledon supporting the developer to find new tenants.

A residents asked about plans for a concert hall behind Morrisons. Craig said that the organisation developing the hall were given two years to come up with a viable business plan by London Borough of Merton. Cllr Kohler confirmed that the Council was supportive of the hall, but it would need to be commercially viable. Craig said that there also other existing venues for smaller music events.

A resident said that on Wimbledon Hill one side of the road was full of successful shops and restaurants, but the other side is empty. Craig said that there is a plan for the bank building to be converted to an apartment hotel, and we are waiting for developer to start work. Love Wimbledon continues to look for other businesses to move into other sites and a plan is being submitted for the San Lorenzo site.

A resident said that holding the Winterfest on Queens Road meant that the Broadway and wider town centre was too quiet. Craig said he would be working with Wimbledon Quarter to address this.

3 WIMBLEDON COMMON CONSERVATORS UPDATE (Agenda Item 3)

Sue Bucknall, recently re-elected Conservator gave an update on the Commons. Five conservators are elected every three years to protect the public's right to use the common land for exercise and pleasure. The Commons were enshrined as a public good by an Act of Parliament 152 years ago. Three additional Conservators are appointed by government departments.

The Conservators are funded by a levy covering $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from Common. Other income comes from letting, events and café. The Commons is hosting a rugby sevens festival this week which also brings in income, but they are not permitted to close off sections of the Commons for ticket events like festivals. Sue said the Conservators want to use the income to open the commons to other users, for example, [Walk and Talk](#) events.

The Conservators have received funding from the Mayor of London's Rewilding Fund to improve [Queensmere Pond](#), and is also looking for other projects to also improve heathland. Sue said they are also promoting the Commons to local businesses to use

for volunteering days. The Commons will be hosting an annual arts event and are keen to make the site more interesting for children. Nature Club looking for new volunteers to help support their work. Residents can become [Friends of Wimbledon Common](#) and will get extra benefits in return for their donation.

A resident asked if London Borough of Merton had objected to levy increase and Sue said that Conservators had consulted with levy payers and had 87% of respondents had supported increase so it was disappointing that the Council had objected.

A resident asked about access to the Common for cyclist. Sue said they are looking to improve this and are working with Wandsworth Cyclists and other stakeholders to see how this could work. The new paths installed recently are suitable for young cyclists.

Craig Hurring said that a survey is going out to businesses and will be asking about volunteering so would be good to connect with Conservators to offer opportunities. Sue said that the Commons can offer a specific piece of land for businesses to manage and say they support.

4 SPECIALIST CANCER SERVICES FOR CHILDREN (Agenda Item 4)

Cllr Kohler gave an update on an [NHS review of cancer services for children in south London](#). Services at the Royal Marsden could have moved to either St George's in Tooting or Evelina in Lambeth. During the consultation all the local political parties joined in supporting St George's as the new home for services.

Following the consultation, a decision has been made to move these services to the Evelina. St Georges has made a statement expressing disappointment but has not yet made a decision as to whether they may mount a legal challenge. The local MPs are also asking the Sec of State to review the decision. There will be no changes to services until 2026 when the new facilities will be ready.

A resident asked if any services move from St Georges to Evelina and Cllr Kohler said the proposals were quite complex but the information is [online](#) if anyone would like more detailed information.

A resident asked if there will be any local campaigns and Cllr Kohler said that there were campaigns as part of the consultation and local MPS have written to Sec of State.

5 LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS (Agenda Item 5)

Kris Witherington highlighted a number of local issues and events to the Forum.
Cost of Living

Events continuing including April at Merton Civic Centre in Morden, June at Pollards Hill Library, September at Colliers Wood Library and November at Mitcham Library. Please check the council's website and social media for the latest information. There is a Cost-of-Living e-newsletter you can sign up for.

Local Plan

Following the review by the Planning Inspectorate they have recommended several changes to the draft local plan. Residents can view these changes at <https://www.merton.gov.uk/newlocalplan> and any comments should be submitted by Friday 22 March 2024.

Voter ID

London elections on 2 May will be the first in Merton where voters will require photographic ID. You can find a list of acceptable ID on our website and apply for a [Voter Authority Certificate](#) if you need one. www.merton.gov.uk/elections

Scrutiny suggestions

The Scrutiny Team are asking for suggestions for local issues that the various Panels could investigate in 2024/25. You can complete an [online form](#) at www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny or email scrutiny@merton.gov.uk

Climate Action

The next [Resident Summary Report](#) of Merton's Climate Delivery Plan is out. This report tracks our progress over the last year and shows residents what we have planned for 2024, to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to climate change in Merton. www.merton.gov.uk/climatechange

Activity Finder

New website to help residents find low-cost physical activities.

<https://getactive.io/area/merton/>

Wimbledon Bookfest - Spring Season

24 March – 27 March at New Wimbledon Theatre & Wimbledon Library

<https://www.wimbledonbookfest.org/whats-on/>

Wimbledon Windmill Museum

The [Windmill Museum](#) on Wimbledon Common opening up the Museum for the summer **on Saturday 30th March**. Also looking for volunteers

<https://www.wimbledonwindmill.org.uk/>

Richard Smart said there would be an Interfaith Walk on Saturday 13 April at 11am from Wimbledon Station that would tour local faith sites to raise funds for [Faith in Action](#). Any queries can be sent to [Richard](#).

6 OPEN FORUM (Agenda Item 6)

Peter Walker asked for an update on the street names motion presented to Council in 2023. Kris Witherington said he had been advised by colleagues that they have been reviewing the options for displaying the information but due to the pre-election period an update will be provided in mid-May on a proposed way forward. Peter suggested

the Forum remind the Council of the motion from the Forum and the obligation to resolve this issue and this was supported by attendees.

A resident asked Dundonald Rec tennis courts still closed. This will be raised with the Green Spaces team for an update.

A resident asked about [Abbey Recreation Ground](#) where the tennis courts have been locked off and a large area of the park is fenced off. Cllr Braithwaite said that the tennis courts are free but need to be booked when you will be given a code to access them. The Rutlish Foundation own a large area of the land and they had insisted area was fenced off by London Borough of Merton.

A resident asked about the litter bins Dundonald Rec which are not fit for purpose. Kris Witherington said that there is a replacement programme for bins and the Dundonald Rec ones are due to be replaced in coming months

David Hall from Wimbledon Community Association said they had recently recruited a new web administrator so plan to expand their [online offer](#).

A resident suggested that at future meetings we should invite Resident Associations and Wimbledon Society to speak about their work.

Cllr Kohler said that no decision will be made on the AELTC planning application until after the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections. Any decision could then still be called in by the Secretary of State. Cllr Kohler said the changes to the New Local Plan includes a new chapter on Wimbledon Park so residents and local groups can respond by the deadline on 22 March.

A resident raised the issue of public toilet access and Kris said that at the Morden Community Forum residents were told that a new coordinator for the community toilet scheme is going to be recruited and that a feasibility study for a toilet at Morden Station was taking place.

A resident said they felt more action should be taken against cycling on pavements and leaving dockless hire bikes on the pavement. Kris said that details of how to report obstructively parked hire cycles are available on the [Council website](#). The resident said that active travel plans should include walking and cycling, not just focus on cycling.

A resident asked about the process for erecting phone masts. Kris said that if the mast required planning permission then usually letters would be sent to residents nearby and notices would be placed locally.

Peter Walker said he wanted to congratulate the Save Dorset Hall group for getting a blue plaque for suffragette and social campaigner Rose Lamartine Yates. The group had also persuaded the owners, Clarion, to repair the roof. Developers have said the garden will remain open to the park when the building is converted to flats.

Love Wimbledon update

Wimbledon Community Forum

Craig Hurring,
Chief Executive, Love Wimbledon

Award-winning businesses



Time & Leisure Food and Culture Awards 2024

Best Newcomer: Tampopo

Best Place to Eat in Wimbledon: Roxie Steak

Favourite Entertainment Venue: New Wimbledon Theatre

Family Attraction of the Year: Polka Theatre

Local Restaurant of the Year: Bombay Delight

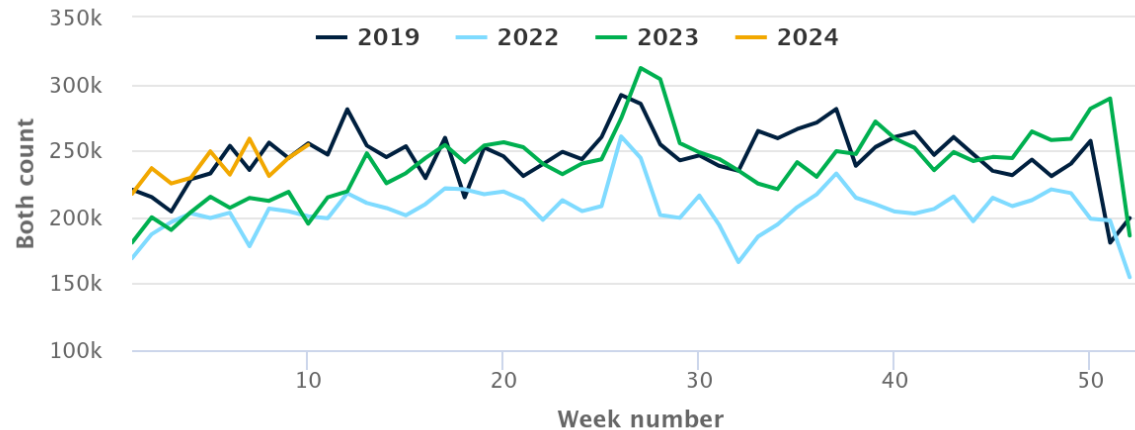
Love Wimbledon Events – Driving Footfall



Footfall is Growing in Wimbledon

- 2023 saw footfall rise by 16.4% in Wimbledon compared to 2022, to almost 12.5 million visitors.
- Starting with Championships Fortnight, and increasingly in Q4, we saw footfall move above pre-pandemic 2019 levels.
- 2024 has started with even stronger footfall performance

Annual Performance



	2024
Wimbledon	16.7%
Greater London	-0.1%
High Street Index - BDSU (BDSU - Multifunctional)	-1.2%
UK	-1.6%

Headlines

The total number of visitors to Wimbledon for the last 52 weeks is 12,802,472 which is 18.6% up on the previous year.

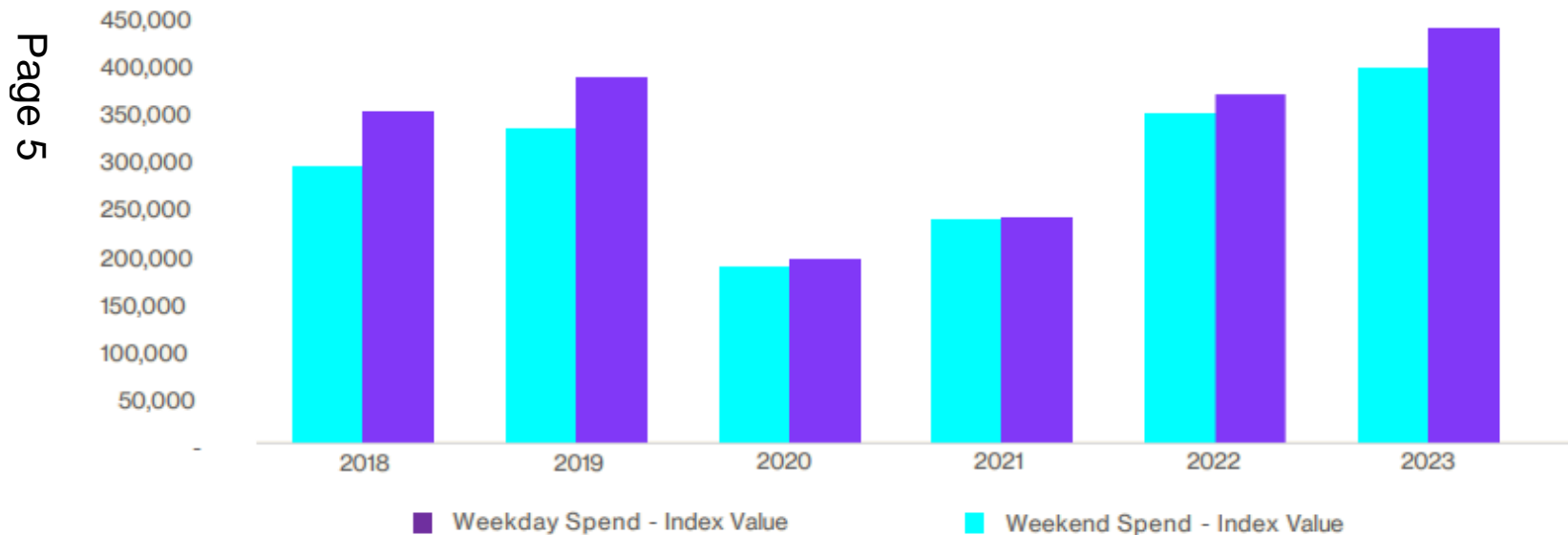
The total number of visitors for the year to date is 2,379,026 which is 16.7% up on the previous year.

Source: MRI Springboard



... as is spend

Mastercard transactions in Wimbledon Town Centre, 2018-2023, indexed for inflation

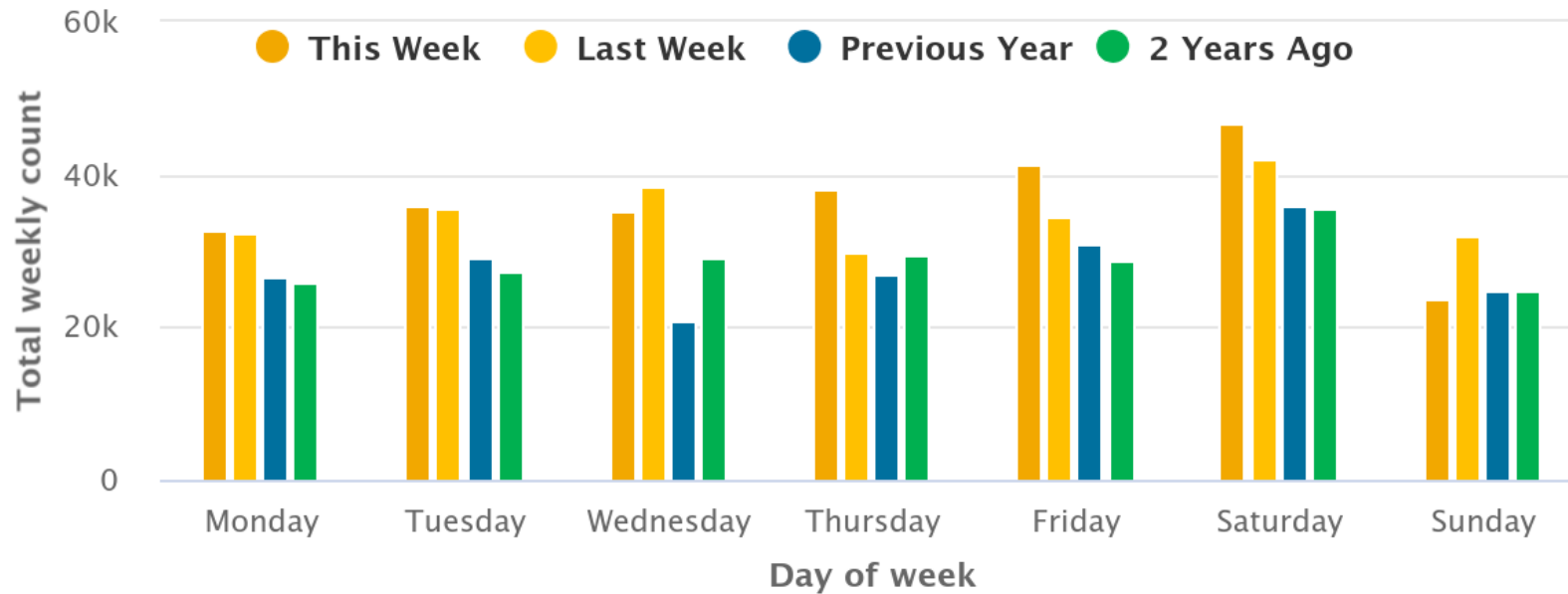


In 2023 spend for weekdays and weekends, exceeds the six-year Wimbledon average by 33%.

Source: GLA High Streets Data Service / Merton Council

Remaining a 7-day town

Daily Comparison (Week 10 : Mon 4 Mar 2024 – Sun 10 Mar 2024)



Rangering Services 2023

Issues Resolved - Calendar Year 2023 (January - December)
3,089 total Instances

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Town Centre 2024



Love Wimbledon Activities

- Business events – Masterclasses, Networking
- LW Street Markets – new vendor testing
- Summer of Sport campaign (incorporating tennis)
- Sustainable September 2024 – bigger and better!
- Winterfest 2024 tbc – remaining on Queen’s Road
- *Evolving Wimbledon* - Conference, 1st October

Business Development News

- Wilko site now under offer
- Two new businesses at 27 the Broadway
- Two new Wimbledon Quarter businesses
- Huddle co-worker hub opens June 2024
- New office development: 247 the Broadway
- *Evolving Wimbledon* - Conference, 1st October

Thank you

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