



Friends of Wimbledon Park

News update for members, November 2013

Car park extension defeated

After a concerted campaign by FOWP, Merton Council's planning application 12/P1181 regarding the permanent extension of the Revelstoke Road car park was rejected by its own planning committee on 10 October. This is a victory for the hundreds of local people who joined us in speaking out against the proposal over the past 18 months, concerned about the damage to this Grade II* listed park. Since the decision, the council has announced that it will remove the hardcore area and reseed the grass. Improvements are also to be made to the surface of the existing car park and the marking out of parking bays (there are currently no disabled spaces).

Vision for the park gains momentum

FOWP's project plan for the park has been widely circulated and includes all Merton and Wandsworth councillors, The Wimbledon Club, the Golf Club and the All England Lawn Tennis Club, seeking their views. As far as we know, this is the only plan to cover the whole of Wimbledon Park, 'joining up' all the interested parties. As part of our consultation, questionnaires have been sent to Revelstoke Road residents regarding the entrance to the park, which we feel could be greatly improved.

Break-ins at athletics stadium

The current fencing of the athletics stadium is failing to prevent break-ins and a 3m high fence, inside the tree line, is being considered; the cost will be around £40,000-£50,000. FOWP agreed to Hercules Athletics Club's request that we support the erection of the new fence.

New bins for BBQ coals

Merton Council is to install waste bins for the disposal of BBQ coals, which caused problems during the hot summer this year. These will probably be sited by the trees surrounding the athletics track, near the sailing base and along the path close to the bowls pavilion. FOWP is to be consulted about the exact positioning.

Alterations to the park

Large logs have been placed in the Wimbledon Park Road entrance car park to prevent cars driving into the park itself, hopefully deterring very large parties. Various pieces of playground equipment have been replaced. The path at the back of the splash pool has been resurfaced and lighting has been fitted along the path between Wimbledon Park Road and the stadium. The toilets have been refurbished. Work has begun to replace the concrete panels along Wimbledon Park Road with 1.8m high railings.

Dog attack

A greyhound was recently attacked in the park by an unleashed bull terrier. Such attacks must be reported to the police since Merton Council does not have dog wardens for the park. Dog owners should note as many details as possible when



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making a complaint, including descriptions of the offending dog and its owner, the time of day the incident occurred and vehicle registration number where relevant.

Policing of the park

Crime levels are believed to be low in the park but collecting crime data is difficult because there are four wards (Southfields, West Hill, Wimbledon Park and Village) and two councils (Merton and Wandsworth) involved. We're investigating the best way to rectify this situation.

Football pitches

Football pitches have not been released for use this season as the grass has been very slow to re-establish itself. A complaint regarding the lack of changing facilities has been raised.

Foraging in the park

People have been seen picking watercress from the stream and there was a recent case of children eating poisonous berries. Visitors to the park are advised not to forage for food in case of mishaps.

Drainage problems on golf course and cricket pitch

The Golf Club has spent around £1.4 million pounds over the last two years on landscaping features without addressing the fundamental drainage problems. Similarly, the Wimbledon Club (Cricket Club) faced formal written criticism from the local Surrey cricket authority and a warning that the condition of the outfield was not up to standard. The drainage problems are due to the artificially high water table, which is caused by the lake silting up and being held at an artificially high level to enable watersports.

Café sign

The large and unsightly 'Café Open' sign next to the bowling green has still not been removed, despite a request to the café by Merton's Greenspaces manager Doug Napier. It was felt that the sign could be replaced by smaller 'direction' signs.