

Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

Autumn 2025

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Advertising in this magazine.

Contact Pamela Healy: pam.2015@outlook.com

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO DELIVER NEWSLETTERS IN

Durnsford Road and Mount Road

If you would like to help, please contact Pamela Healy at pam.2015@outlook.com

Chairman's Report

Save Wimbledon Park

Since my last report the Judicial Review took place on the 8th and 9th of July.

All those members on our general email list are up to date with the disappointing results of the JR, as are all those who have attended the public meetings.

On the first morning of the hearing a huge crowd gathered outside the High Court to show their support for the campaign, which resulted in the Judge recognizing the strength of public interest and making available an overspill court.



However, the dispute is far from over. As I write this report for the newsletter, a new supporters Bulletin (10) has just been issued by SWP, indicating that, after much consideration, they have decided to apply to the Court of Appeal for leave to appeal the recent judgment. Clearly this decision has not been taken lightly but it appears that they have been advised that they have a realistic prospect of success. A decision from the Court of Appeal is expected within 2 to 4 months. Of course, the Judicial Review deals only with planning.

The AELTC have conceded that their proposed development is incompatible with the statutory public recreation trust, which according to the GLA's own advice is present over the former golf course land. The existence or otherwise of the statutory trust is the subject of entirely separate proceedings which are very much alive and progressing towards a major hearing next January.

Finally, it bears repeating whatever the outcome of these two court cases, the restrictive covenants remain firmly in place. As the Judge remarked: "It is not in issue that the Golf Course Land is the subject of restrictive covenants which require it to be kept open and free of built development". The AELTC scheme

cannot proceed unless the covenants are released by Merton Council. Merton remain silent on the question of whether they intend to enforce the covenants, or not. The report on pages 6 & 7, from our MP Paul Kohler, refers to this.



Of course all this took place in the middle of the Tennis Fortnight but wasn't the only event to draw a lot of attention, namely the 'Queue' in Wimbledon Park.

Regrettably, numerous complaints were made during the busy days of the first week and the sad thing was that the problems were largely a repeat of past years which had been noted and promises made to improve.

Sadly this turned out not to be the case.

Numbers camping in the park were bigger than ever and it was reported that on one day as many as 13,000 people were waiting in the park.

Friends of Wimbledon Park (FOWP) have published an excellent report on their website which is worth reading. It raises a whole range of issues which need close attention in the future. Some of the issues relate to:

- Non Publication of and non enforcement of Bye laws.
- Serious lack of proper toilet facilities for the numbers involved, leading to undesirable use of Horse Close Wood and other areas of the park. This leads to serious health and hygiene problems.
- Lack of proper control of camping. Increase in bad behaviour by campers.
 Drinking and noise.
- Insufficient crowd management resources.
- Lack of clear information on open and closing times of the park.
- Why there is a need for using the park for parking when AELTC have plenty of their own land.
- Why camping should be continued in the park at all given the extent of their own land.

WE SINCERELY HOPE THAT MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS ARE IMPLEMENTED BY THE AELTC NEXT YEAR, ASSUMING THE QUEUE WILL BE IN THE PUBLIC PARK.

A message from our MP Paul Kohler



Politics, like life, often involves contradictions.

On the first Friday of the All England Championships, Samantha and I were sitting in the Royal Box alongside the likes of Gary Lineker, Anthony Joshua and Mary Berry watching Emma Raducanu's valiant but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to reach the 4th Round. Four days later I was standing outside the Royal Courts of Justice in the Strand, alongside a large number of my constituents, supporting Save Wimbledon Park's valiant but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to overturn the Mayor of London's decision to grant the AELTC planning

permission to build a 10-storey stadium, 38 further tennis courts, 10 outbuildings and over 9km of road across Wimbledon Park.

Some constituents have asked how I could do both and was it not hypocritical to accept their hospitality, but then support the Judicial Review.

It's a fair question but a charge I do not accept. As your MP, part of my role is to promote the constituency and support both its people and its businesses. To decline an invitation to the Championships, in my capacity as MP, would have been seen as a snub to one of the most significant businesses in the constituency. Likewise, whilst I was privately sceptical the planning permission would be over-turned, it would have been quite wrong not to stand with my constituents in support of Save Wimbledon Park's legal action.

As for the current state of play; notwithstanding the High Court's decision, the match is still very much on - the Save Wimbledon Park group might have lost the first set but there are two more still to play; and, unlike in the tennis, they only need one to win.

In January the High Court is set to hear the public trust case which, following the comparatively recent Supreme Court decision of Day v Shropshire, will determine whether or not the land the AELTC bought in 1993 is subject to a public trust. No matter what they say publicly, the All England Club cannot be feeling overly confident, with the 5 KCs who have advised on the position currently split 3 to 2. The AELTC's title is clearly not certain. That, of course, is why the AELTC are

funding the SWP group's legal action, as it would be challenging (to say the least least!) to raise the finances necessary for the development when such serious doubts exist over the extent of their rights to the land.

The legal action is likely to last some time, as whichever party loses at first instance is likely to appeal; but close on the heels of the initial hearing into the public trust comes next May's local elections where my party will be seeking to wrest control of Merton from Labour, who have been in charge for all but 4 of the last 30 years. Why is that significant? Because, no matter what happens in the public trust case, and even though the AELTC have planning permissions, the covenants they agreed back in 1993, not to build on the land they were buying, are still very much operative and enforceable provided Merton Council choose to enforce them. That's why my party has tabled a number of motions in Council meetings calling on the Labour administration to enforce the covenants - only for them to vote us down on each occasion.

I have always said that ultimately what happens on Wimbledon Park will be a political decision which is why I have been trying to the get the AELTC to talk to both the local community and the local Council. Thankfully, after four years of refusing, Debbie Jevans, the much more amenable new chair of the All England Club, adopted a fresh approach and agreed to my suggestion to meet with the SWP group before the Championships and is due to meet them again next month. Sadly, Merton Council are still refusing to engage; but that could all change following next May's election - depending upon who wins of course!

My position, echoing that of the SWP group, remains the same. We want a compromise that allows the All England Club to continue to prosper whilst preserving the amenity of Wimbledon Park. That means scaling back the plans, improving the District Line tube service and addressing issues such as the problems that occurred this year in particular with the ever-increasing numbers of people camping overnight in the park.

Interestingly, every member of the All England Club Samantha and I talked to during our day in the Royal Box agreed that all we needed was a compromise.

So, it's one set down but everything to play for!

FRIENDS OF WIMBLEDON PARK NEWS

FOWP was formed as a voluntary organisation in 2012 to promote collaboration and offer a forum for discussion between the various owners, leaseholders, residents and park visitors. We became a charity (CIO) in January 2025. We are working to promote improvements to the park. Revelstoke Road entrance and the Waterfall area are our two priority areas, and both depend on funding.

We formally_raised concerns with LBM about plans to build a boardwalk on the lake. A boardwalk will interrupt and damage historic views of the lake, which was designed as a flowing landscape framed by trees. A boardwalk will also harm biodiversity and will reduce the area of the lake, harming the interests of anglers and sailors. We believe that the covenant for a public lakeside walk (once golf ceased to be played) should be honoured.

We have also been very concerned about a proposal to construct Padel courts in the athletics track. We believe the proposal goes against LB Merton's published plan to consider all development proposals in the park in light of long term management and maintenance. Padel courts in the proposed location would harm the landscape, obstruct sightlines and would reduce greenspace and thus lead to a biodiversity loss. We urge LB Merton to act on their published policy for Wimbledon Park. Our park is listed in Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk' register. Friends of Wimbledon Park hope that LB Merton will address the reasons for this, when considering development proposals. Our chairman, Nick Steiner, after discussion with FOWP EC, emailed LB Merton's Director of Culture, Sports and Libraries recently, to make these and other points about introducing Padel into Wimbledon Park.

This year's Wimbledon Fortnight was very challenging for regular park visitors. Friends of Wimbledon Park have gathered comments and views and published these on our website, Report on the Wimbledon Tennis Fortnight 2025 -Impact on the Public Wimbledon Park | Friends of Wimbledon Park. We hope that readers will take time to read our report and we will follow up to the best of our ability. We don't have sight of the commercial agreement between AELTC and LB Merton, so it was hard to know how to resolve the many issues that arose in the course of the fortnight. These included traffic congestion at park entrances, campers using wooded areas as toilets, a need for more ladies' toilets, and inadequate crowd management resources to deal with the large number of visitors to the park. Friends of Wimbledon Park cannot understand why bye-laws - mandating actions or prohibitions in designated areas and imposing penalties for non-compliance - have not been displayed or enforced this year. Car parking in the public park continues during Wimbledon Fortnight, despite AELTC having vacant possession of land nearby. This is extremely unpopular with the local community. The Friends renew our request for car parking in the public park to cease forthwith. Contd. on next page.

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We welcome new and returning members at this crucial time for the future of Wimbledon Park. Please visit our website, join us, and get involved in our activities.

Join Us | Friends of Wimbledon Park

Beth McKillop, Secretary, Friends of Wimbledon Park



Calling all residents – Wimbledon Park needs you!

Wimbledon Park is a great place to live and work and the Wimbledon Park Residents' Association aims to keep it that way!

The Residents' Association works for the good of the community. For example:

- we promote planting and improvements in Wimbledon Park and Dunsford Rec;
- we work with the local police to help tackle crime;
- we monitor local planning applications and offer positive input (or constructive criticism if necessary);
- we support local families and individuals faced with tragedy.

It's important to have a sense of pride and belonging in your local community and that's exactly what membership provides. Members receive updates on important local issues, notice of forthcoming neighbourhood events, and the WPRA Newsletter three times a year.

Wimbledon Park is growing and improving all the time and the Residents' Association is more active than ever but we can't function without funding.

It would be wonderful if you could support the Residents' Association by becoming a member today.

Membership costs just £10 per year and joining is easy. Go to **wimbledonpark.com**, click the 'Join Us' button and follow the steps to create your WPRA membership account. You'll be transferred to the GoCardless platform to set up an annual £10 Direct Debit membership payment. And if you are unsure of your membership status, please email wpra.members@gmail.com and we will check for you.

An individual can achieve only so much but as a team we can achieve so much more!

Report from your local Councillors



The Queue in Wimbledon Park

Your local Lib Dem councillors met with AELTC in May before the tournament to raise concerns about the continued use of the Great Field in Wimbledon Park and to ask for specific actions to mitigate the inconvenience to local park users. Unfortunately, many problems arose as the queue started to form and were not dealt with in a timely manner. Issues such as a lack of sufficient toilet provision, thoughtless behaviour by campers, litter, use of electric bikes, blocking paths, poor information about gate closure and lack of appropriate security have been identified and a report sent to both AELTC and the Council. We await their response.

Blue/green algae in the lake and stream

This is a recurring problem but is particularly bad this year. The Environment Agency is investigating but, in the meantime, please be vigilant and ensure that children and dogs are kept away from the affected area.

The ongoing saga of the missing bollard

We were disappointed that the Council did not replace the bollard outside Wimbledon Park station as they promised (by the end of June). A second one was knocked over and has been re-erected. Finally, as this newsletter goes to press the missing one is replaced. It took 9 months! We deserve better!

Replacement trees and trees untrimmed

We continue to get lots of emails about trees not being trimmed, tree roots causing problems with house foundations, seemingly healthy trees being felled and empty tree pits. There is a direct email address to report these issues: streettrees@merton.gov.uk and we will continue to report any concerns you have. We were pleased to see that new trees are now being planted in empty tree pits, but a shame they are being planted in the summer which limits their chance of surviving. If you have a new tree near you, please water it.

Weeds on streets

We have noticed that weeds are not being dealt with all over the ward. We are trying to get a definitive answer about who is responsible for this since the Council took street cleaning back in house since 1st April. The weeds on Durnsford Bridge have now been dealt with and Kenilworth Avenue has been reported. If your street has a problem, let us know.

Hire bikes causing problems

We understand the appeal of hire bikes and welcome an alternative to cars. However, they need to be better managed. The new cycle parking bays are a start but some are in the wrong place, many bikes continue to be badly parked and falling bikes can cause damage to cars. We are reporting issues with bikes to the Council and the hire bike companies.

Fly-tipping

This continues to be an issue in the ward. Report issues to fixmystreet.com. It is an app that is easy (and free) to download and use. We have found it to be useful and effective.

Finally - Good news

Water fountains have now been installed in Wimbledon Park (just three years after we started to campaign for them). Hurrah!

Photo caption

We were approached by local residents wanting to talk about litter in the park at our recent surgery.

Jil, Sam and Tony

Jil.hall@merton.gov.uk, Samantha.macarthur@merton.gov.uk,

Tony.reiss@merton.gov.uk

Blue-green Algae in Wimbledon Park

Dave Dawson reports on the pollution of Wimbledon Park Brook on July 23rd and 24th.

A dog went into the polluted water of the brook on the morning of the 24th July. Knowing the risk that a blue-green algal bloom poses, the owner took it to a Vet, who put the dog on fluids and observation. We were lucky: that evening the dog was discharged unharmed.

The brook was unpolluted on the morning of the 23rd. The murky, turquoise water was first noticed that evening where the brook discharges into the River Wandle in Earlsfield. This was reported to Thames Water's hotline (0800 316 9800) by Tony Reiss, our Ward Councillor, and by Merton's Pollution Control Team. After visiting the site on the afternoon of the 24th, a further report was made by the Angling Club. The brook was still polluted on the morning of the 25th, but I found the pollution to be over by the afternoon of the 26th. So, the event lasted about two days. Everyone was most concerned over its possible effects. I made an Environmental Information request to Thames Water, but have received no acknowledgement nor response.

Photographs, and direct observation by an angler, proved that the polluted water originated in the lake. The commonest blue-green there enjoys the name *Aphanizomenon flos-aquae* and I have often spotted it in the warmer months of the year. It was numerous in my routine sampling on June 19th and super-abundant on July 11th, so the bloom a fortnight later might have been expected. When I was able to sample again on the 26th, the bloom was over but *Aphanizomenon* remained numerous in both the lake and brook. This species has bloomed several times before but, luckily, we have seen no adverse effects from it. Nevertheless, the dog owner was right to follow the official advice and take precautions.

Three other species of blue-green have been found in the lake. One of them, *Oscillatoria*, was abundant between February and April this year, but not at the time of the pollution incident. I alerted Merton Council to that bloom. Two other species have occurred in previous years and one of them, *Dolicospermum* left a dog disabled when it bloomed in early September 2022.

These blooms are difficult to deal with. They come after the species has grown exponentially and outnumbers everything else in the water. It runs out of resources, leading to a mass death of the blue-green alga, sometimes accompanied by the release of toxins. These incidents arise rapidly and can disappear just as quickly, so warnings usually come too late and inspections can miss the cause. Furthermore, not all blooms are toxic, and monitoring is expensive and difficult.

We should ask why blooms occur regularly in our much-used lake? We surely want to avoid them if we can. Blooms come when three things apply. They need warm weather and plenty of sunlight, but the crucial cause is the abundance of phosphate pollutants in our lake and a shortage of nitrates. This is shown by my measurements. Our lake has always had low nitrate levels. Many blue-green algae can fix atmospheric nitrogen, so they are at an advantage over plants. I measured high concentrations of phosphates in April and May this year, moderate levels in June and low levels in July. This fits the story that the *Aphanizomenon* was using up the phosphate during that growth burst, until it ran out, leading to its mass death in late July.

To avoid these blooms and the risk they pose to dogs, and to people, we need to deal with that phosphate pollution. There's much phosphate locked away deep in the lake sediment, but disturbance can bring it up into the water. Disturbance can be by bottom-feeding fish, such as Carp, or by clearance of waterweed for water sports. The phosphates, can also come from geese feeding on the short grass nearby and returning to defecate in the lake, or from excessive feeding of birds by the public, and there will be deposition from our polluted London atmosphere, but the big unknown is phosphate from the regular flow of the three main tributaries, none of which is regularly monitored. One of these tributaries takes drainage from the AELTC grounds and AELTC is strangely silent on what they send down that tube. AELTC doesn't give access to those tributaries for we volunteers, and professional monitoring costs money. We really need the Environment Agency to knock heads together and come up with a solution to this worrying, chronic ill-health of our heavily-used public park. They could start by arranging regular monitoring and publishing the results. If only....



Tree work at Brooklands Allotments







Finally, after 9 months, the important bollard has been replaced (14th August) in Arthur Road. How long will it last?

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your community Hall

at 170 Arthur Road, Wimbledon Park

All booking information can be found at

www.wimbledonpark.com

Email Hire enquiries to: wimbledonparkhall@gmail.com

Wimbledon Park Community Trust

The Trust (WPCT) is a Registered Charity incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee. It manages Wimbledon Park Hall, and leases the associated café to an independent operator. It has a 99 year lease from Merton Council (effective 2014).

It is entirely voluntarily run by its Trustees/Directors.

The Trust is looking for new local Trustees with appropriate skills to assist with Hall bookings, bookkeeping, maintenance and the general running of the Trust.

In the first instance, please contact lain Simpson, the Chairman.

Email: iainsimpson@imi-consulting.com

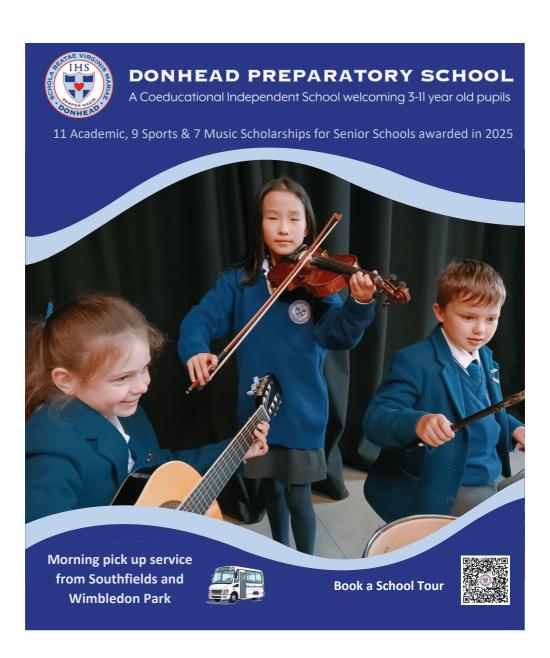
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DURNSFORD RECREATION GROUND

Regular users of the Rec will have noticed the new corral surrounding a rather large hole that has been introduced in the copse to the side of the allotments and may be wondering why! The ditch at the back of the allotments, which has been there since the mid 1800's, drains through a pipe at the back of the Rec and into the Wellington Industrial Estate. This pipe has collapsed, which resulted in the area at the back of the copse and in the allotments becoming flooded during last winter and spring. The solution introduced by the Council is to put in a seasonal pond, allowing the excess water from the ditch to run into the pond during wet weather. This I am told is a temporary solution until the pipe can be repaired by Thames Water, how long this will take is anyone's guess.



Fruit Trees - I have applied for a grant from the Wimbledon Park Community Trust to plant an area at the back of the wildflower bed with fruit trees and bee and butterfly friendly shrubs. These will be 2 cherry trees and a Victoria plum to replace those we lost this year in the fruit hedge, together with apricot and pear trees and blueberry bushes. Planting will hopefully take place in late autumn after the area has been cleared of brambles.

Abundance Fruit Day - The annual fruit day will be held on **13 September** 11.00 - 14.30 at St Mark's Church Hall and grounds, Wimbledon Hill (behind the library). On sale will be local honey, jams, chutney, cakes and pies, freshly squeezed apple juice and garden plants. There will also be children's activities and live music.

Contd. on next page

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Volunteers Needed - Would you like to help out in the Rec? There are 3 areas of the Rec that are not looked after by the council.

The shrub bed in the middle of the field, this area was planted to commemorate the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002 and requires weeding and the cutting back of shrubs a few times a year.

The spring bulb/wildflower bed by the school requires weeding, planting of more spring bulbs and sowing wildflower seeds.

The fruit hedge, which was planted to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012 requires pruning once a year.

Help will also be needed to plant the new fruit trees.

If you would like to help me with any of these tasks, please get in touch with me at pam.2015@outlook.com

Together we can make the Durnsford Rec a more beautiful place to visit.

Pam Healy

+++++++++++++++

2 Volunteers required to help with watering of the flower boxes in Arthur Road.

Another area of Wimbledon Park which benefits from close attention by volunteers all year round is the flower boxes in Arthur Road.

Because of the lack of rain and very hot weather this year, these have required constant watering. We would be grateful for a couple more volunteers to share the load. Many hands etc.!

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 YOUR LOCAL

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Metropolitan Police

The <u>Metropolitan police</u> are rolling out a new platform called Met Engage. It will allow you to receive updates from our neighbourhood police team on what they are doing in our area to tackle issues which are most important to you. Going forward, this will be their main method of communication with residents, If you are currently on their email list, you will have already heard about this. They will be phasing out their current email mailings, so you will need to sign up with Met Engage to continue to hear from them.

You may sign up for Met engage here www.metengage.co.uk

If you are concerned about the number of emails, I suggest you check only The Police option. This can be found in the Settings on the website. You can change these options at any time.

This is not a crime reporting system, but an opportunity to engage with the police more easily. It will also allow them to target crimes more specifically. While we will continue to pursue burglars in the area, there are steps you can do to help keep your property safe. Make sure that you:

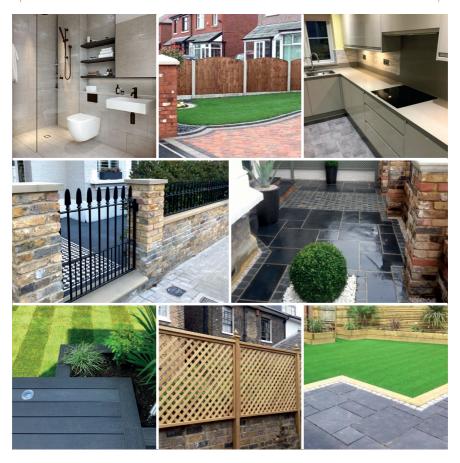
- Double lock your door every time you leave the house
- If you can, move garden furniture or bins away from windows so that thieves cannot use them to gain access.
- Use laminated glass or security film on ground floor and accessible windows.
- Use a sash stop if you have sash windows to prevent people opening them enough to climb through.
- If your windows open outwards, use a key operated lock check these are locked before leaving the house.
- · Make sure all valuables are out of sight.
- Keep handbags and keys away from letterboxes or cat flaps.
- In the evening shut the curtains and leave lights on.
- Set your burglar alarm
- Lock your shed or garage
- Mark, register or record your valuables.

Please go to <u>our website to find the latest advice and quidance</u> on keeping yourself safe and protecting your home. We hope the information above is useful and addresses to some degree the concerns that you have raised. If you have experienced this issue or have information regarding an incident, please report it using our online reporting tools at https://www.met.police.uk/, speak to an operator in our Force Communications Room via our online web chat or call the non-emergency number 101.

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WHY JOIN THE PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AS A MONITOR?

- Get to know Wimbledon and its community.
- Stay informed about local developments.
- Help shape and protect the area's future.
- Explore Wimbledon's diverse architecture.
- Receive training and ongoing support.

WHAT DOES A MONITOR DO?

- Review Applications: Assess a particular week's planning applications for the Society's area, considering Merton Council policies and their impact on the community and neighbours.
- Monitoring Rotation: Depending on the number of monitors, expect to review applications every 5–6 weeks.
- Raising Concerns: If an application seems unsuitable, inform the group. A discussion will
 follow, and if an objection is agreed upon, draft a letter to the Council for group input.
- Providing Feedback: On non-monitoring weeks, review and share opinions on applications circulated by others.
- Major Applications: Significant proposals affecting the community will be discussed by the full Planning and Environmental Committee in person.
- 6. Communication & Meetings:
 - Monitors primarily communicate via email.
 - Full PEC Committee meetings (every 8 weeks) are held at the Village Hall, Ridgway, SW19.
 - These meetings cover planning applications, environmental issues, and ongoing campaigns.

For more information or a chat, please contact chairmanpc@wimbledonsociety.org.uk



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WPRA Committee 2024/2025

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Marianne Linden - Website Ravensbury Terrace

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Nigel Israel - Treasurer Ryfold Road

Paresh Modasia Home Park Road

Pauline Mullin - Membership/Website Wellington Road

Kish Modasia - Facebook Home Park Road

lain Simpson, Chairman & Newsletter Editor Home Park Road

Peter West - Planning Cromwell Road

Elio Zammuto Ravensbury Terrace

Cllr Jil Hall, ex officio Avondale Road

Cllr Samantha MacArthur, ex officio King's Road

Cllr Tony Reiss, ex officio Dora Road

Notice of AGM

Date: Wednesday 29th October, 2025 Venue: Wimbledon Park Hall

Time: 8.00pm

Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

Agenda

Apologies Minutes of last meeting **Matters Arising** Chairman's Report **Accounts** To consider the Winding up of the Association

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Immediately following

Meeting of the members of Wimbledon Park Resident's Association (Company Limited by Guarantee)

Agenda

Report of the Directors Membership numbers and Register Committee

Refreshments will be served at the end of this meeting

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AFC Wimbledon is a football club like no other.

At Plough Lane, it's not just the football that brings us together.

You don't just support this fan-owned club – you are part of it.

It's where memories are made, friendships grow, and everyone belongs.









Book your trial class on our website www.siegerisdance.com

Siegeris Dance







Join us for our Saturday Ballet classes from ages 3+

Twirling Tots classes 9:00am-9:45 am
Pre Primary Ballet (5-6yrs) 9:45am-10:30am
Primary Ballet (6-7yrs) 10:30am-11:15am
Grade 1 Ballet (7yrs+) 11:15am-12:15om
Grade 2 Ballet (8yrs+) 12:15pm-1:15pm

Our Ballet classes are the perfect first step for your little dancer!



