



Wimbledon Park Residents' Association

Christmas 2025

wimbledonpark.com



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Guy Fawkes, November 5th 1605
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November 3rd 2025
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Christmas edition 2025

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Front cover picture courtesy of Andrew Pinkess

Advertising in this magazine.

Contact Pamela Healy: pam.2015@outlook.com

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Registered in England and Wales, Company No. 16005278. Registered Office:
170 Arthur Road, Wimbledon Park, SW19 8AQ.**

Chairman's Report

The Association held its AGM on 29 October 2025 at Wimbledon Park Hall. There was an excellent turnout from Residents and the meeting included committee members, local councillors, guest speakers from Merton Council, Christopher Coombe and MP Paul Kohler. Apologies were noted, and previous minutes were approved.

Key Updates

Incorporation: WPRA transitioned to a company limited by guarantee in October 2024 to ensure limited liability. Current directors are Iain Simpson, Pamela Healy and Paresh Modasia, with plans to add at least two more. Dissolution of the old Association was agreed by those present and closure of the Santander bank account.

Membership & Website: A successful membership drive by Pauline Mullin has brought in 84 new and renewal members over the last year. Robert Kennedy continues to manage the WPRA website and related community sites voluntarily.

Accounts: Due to the transition to a limited company the accounts shown were for the short period for the 1st September 2024 to the 31st March 2025. They showed no outstanding liabilities and assets of £15,375. Major expenses over the last 12 months have been £4,000 in donations to the Save Wimbledon Park fund raising campaign and £5,000 in printing costs (a catch up on cheques issued in the past not being cashed by the printer).

Council & Community Reports

Councillors highlighted local initiatives such as traffic management, tree maintenance, waste control, and park improvements. Anthony Hopkins from the Council outlined cultural projects funded by a £1.2m borough grant and updates on green space management. Andrew Kauffman and John Igglesden discussed park services, tree planting, and pollarding backlogs.

Major Issues

Events in Wimbledon Park: Residents raised concerns about large events impacting park use, noise, and cleanup. Council assured better oversight and environmental charges reinvested into parks.

AELTC Development: Christopher Coombe reported ongoing legal challenges against AELTC's expansion plans, including seeking permission to Appeal the recent Judicial Review decision and lobbying members of the House of Lords to block efforts by some members of the House of Lords who proposed an amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that could remove public trust protections.

MP's Address

Paul Kohler expressed concern over the same amendment issue, urging residents to lobby against it. He also discussed transport issues, parliamentary processes, and ongoing engagement with AELTC.

Closing

Iain thanked all the guest speakers and called for more residents to join the committee. The meeting ended with refreshments.

Good News!

The Amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill put forward by the Lords Banner, Grabiner, O'Donnell and Pannick and debated finally on the 3rd November, was rejected by the House of Lords. This attempt to deny public trust rights was deplored by the Save Wimbledon Park Campaign and was criticised by many peers of all political parties who were engaged in the debate.

The amendment as proposed would have back dated to 1980 and make a change to the Local Government Act which would have allowed any purchaser of land from a local authority to take it free of an existing public recreation trust.

During the debate Baroness Young of Old Scone (Labour) commented "this amendment has caused substantial concern that it erodes the protection of green space and removes long-standing public rights to green spaces, where the land is sold by a local authority, with or without public consultation".

The amendment sought retrospectively to remove 45 years worth of public rights over open spaces, effectively favouring private landowners in general and AELTC in particular. This means that SWP's legal challenge, scheduled for the High Court in January 2026 remains on track.

Following on this success, Save Wimbledon Park has very recently heard that it has been granted permission to take its Judicial Review case to the Court of Appeal. The Appeal Court has decided that the High Court's decision in July 2025 does require legal scrutiny. The Rt. Hon Lord Justice Holgate's reasons for giving permission included these words:

"The grounds of appeal are arguable with a real prospect of success. The case law on scheme benefits, deliverability, relevance, material considerations and irrationality merits review by the Court of Appeal."

This is a most welcome decision.

Happy Christmas to you all,

Iain

A message from our MP Paul Kohler



Charles Dickens' novel *Bleak House* features the endless legal battle of Jarndyce v Jarndyce, which has been wending its way through the Court of Chancery for generations.

I'm concerned we're witnessing a similar saga unfolding here in SW19 — though not because of failures in our civil justice system, but rather due to the All England Club's stubborn refusal to compromise.

The AELTC currently faces three separate legal challenges:

- Their planning permission, which was finally secured from the Mayor of London after Labour-controlled Merton Council approved it (while Wandsworth withheld consent), is again under scrutiny. Earlier this month, the Court of Appeal allowed Save Wimbledon Park (SWP) to appeal the High Court ruling that had rejected SWP's judicial review application, finding they had a "real prospect of success".
- A completely separate case in the High Court, scheduled for January, will decide whether the section of Wimbledon Park purchased from the Council in 1993 was subject to a public land trust at that time. This matters because, following the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Day v Shropshire Council*, if such a trust existed when the land was sold, it still persists today – since there's no evidence the Council followed proper procedures to transparently terminate the trust before transferring ownership.

- Even if the All England Club clears both these obstacles, they still face the most significant challenge – the legally binding commitments they made in 1993 never to develop the land. According to established case law, these covenants are extremely robust, assuming Merton Council (the beneficiary of these obligations), decides to uphold them. This is precisely why Merton Lib Dems have been persistently, though unsuccessfully, pressing Labour's Merton Council to publicly commit to enforcing the covenants. Should we succeed in taking over the Council in May's local elections, the Merton Lib Dems have pledged to enforce the covenant, unless an accord can be reached.

So far, the AELTC has demonstrated minimal willingness to find middle-ground. They recently attempted to circumvent the public trust matter altogether, with backing from Conservative peer Lord Banner who proposed an amendment to the Planning & Infrastructure Bill in the House of Lords, to overturn *Day v Shropshire*. Fortunately, he withdrew it at the last moment after my Lib Dem colleagues convinced the government not to support such retrospective legislation without proper consultation at minimum.

While the current stalemate appears impossible to resolve, circumstances can shift rapidly. Last month I mentioned how my new role as shadow Northern Ireland spokesperson connects to my constituency work. I'll explore that connection further in my next column, but let me start by noting how, before the *Good Friday Agreement*, the Northern Ireland Troubles appeared as unsolvable as *Jarndyce v Jarndyce* - until dialogue commenced.

To misquote Churchill, "jaw jaw" is better than "law law" and I'm pleased to report the *All England Club* have now agreed to another meeting with *SWP* before Xmas where the latter will try to flesh out a compromise - so who knows where this might lead - perhaps a Yuletide gift is in the offing and sense will prevail.

And on that note can I end by wishing you all a happy Christmas and, the country, a more prosperous New Year.

FRIENDS OF WIMBLEDON PARK NEWS

Over the past few months, Friends of Wimbledon Park have offered monthly guided walks, looking at the history and ecology of the park. A highlight was a special ‘tree walk’ led by environmental scientist Dr Dave Dawson in October. We also presented a family event, the Colour Run, on the Great Field in September. Participants dressed in white were showered with safe, non-toxic colour powder during the non-competitive run. Profits from the event were used to buy bulbs for planting in the park, and a volunteer day of daffodil planting took place in November.

We continue to advocate for the park to be well maintained. Wimbledon Park is included in Historic England’s ‘heritage at risk’ register, and we want Merton to tackle the problems that are leading to this. We have objected to a proposal to introduce padel tennis in the athletics track. You can read our objection on our website, <https://www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org/>. We highlighted the importance of Hercules Wimbledon AC, a thriving community athletics club. We also pointed out that adding padel courts in the athletics track will harm the landscape. If Merton do want to bring padel into the park, they must situate it elsewhere.

Our website now has an online form for reporting noise coming from the park. We sometimes receive comments and complaints from local residents about loud noise coming from the park, particularly when commercial events are staged with amplified music. Of course, these issues should be raised with Merton or Wandsworth Council. However, the website form helps to monitor the problem and strengthens our case that noise should be kept to a reasonable level. Other issues that we hear about include the need for repairs to the children’s playground, and

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changes to the booking system for the Stadium. We are keen to hear local residents' views on the park and encourage you to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and local WhatsApp groups.

Friends of Wimbledon Park have worked since 2012 to promote collaboration and discussion about the park. We are pressing for two projects – the Revelstoke Road entrance and the Waterfall area – to be tackled as priorities. We are continuing to plant and weed around the park, and to pick litter. We've been looking in detail at Horse Close Wood, and making thoughtful, imaginative proposals for its future.

We welcome new members – individuals, families and businesses. Details of how to join are on our website.

www.friendsofwimbledonpark.org



Volunteers planting Daffodil Bulbs, 16th November 2025



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Report from your local Councillors

Before we set out what we've been doing on your behalf this last quarter, we would like to say how much we look forward to speaking with you via email, social media or on the doorstep. As you are probably aware we go out knocking on doors throughout the year and not just at election time and we listen to what you



have to say. We welcome feedback on our leaflets and this newsletter. It was good to meet many of you at the WPRAGM and we are grateful for this space to tell you what we have been up to on your behalf. Thank you.

Fireworks event in Wimbledon Park

This is always a popular and well attended event. Last year there was traffic chaos caused by not having proper traffic plans in place. Tony Reiss talked to the organisers to ensure this was anticipated and avoided this year. There have been other complaints about the noise levels and about the fireworks company taking over the Great Field earlier than it should and cancelling youth football on the Saturday morning. We have raised this with the Council.

Padel Courts

Your councillors are actively reviewing plans to build 7 padel courts in the athletics stadium and making sure that Hercules Athletics Club are happy with the arrangements. If successful, a share of the profits would go towards upgrading the stadium and track.

Playground equipment in Wimbledon Park

We lobbied the Council to repair some of the equipment and surfaces in the playgrounds in Wimbledon Park. Some items have been repaired and surfaces are being looked at.

Wandle Trail

Following complaints from residents about undergrowth requiring cutting back on the section of the Wandle Trail from Plough Lane to Wandsworth, we got the Council to take action and cut it back.

Advertising Hoarding on Durnsford Bridge

We complained to Global about the brightness of the illuminated sign on the bridge which was causing a distraction to drivers and a nuisance to residents living close by. Discussions with Global are on-going but we hope a compromise can be reached soon. For now, it has been switched off.

Leaves and street sweeping

We are continuing to monitor the level of street cleaning in Wimbledon Park ward. Streets are not getting swept weekly and this is a concern, especially with leaves falling. We believe that the Council service could be better. We have asked for more streets to be swept before leaves get wet and dangerous. If anyone feels they could sweep outside their house this would help keep the pavements safe for the elderly and people with mobility issues.

New bins

New bins are being installed to take food waste from flats above shops. We believe this will help reduce the number of black plastic bags being ripped open by animals overnight as they search for food. Two bins have been installed on Arthur Road. Also, a new bin has been installed at Kenilworth Green to relieve the pressure on the existing one which often overflowed before it was emptied.



Jil, Sam and Tony

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

Tony.reiss@merton.gov.uk

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!



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Save Wimbledon Park – eternal vigilance

This is a tribute to the leadership of our Residents' Associations, notably Iain Simpson at WPRA, Susan Cusack at BERA, Sue Cooke at PRA, Simon Wright at SGRA, Sophia Browning at GRA, Ken McFarlane at WHRA, Clive Hilton at WURA, Jeremy Hudson and Kevin O'Neil at the Wimbledon Society. There are many, many more, past and present, who have campaigned, attended Council, GLA and Court Hearings, leafleted and contributed to fund raising (from "*Here's £5, I'm sorry it can't be more*" to those able to contribute more). Five years in, the developer has chosen to litigate rather than to sit down and talk constructively with its community, despite the Court of Appeal now stating that SWP has a "real prospect of success".

"That you can only do a little is no excuse for doing nothing" (John le Carré, 2008, *A Most Wanted Man*).

On the 150th anniversary of the Public Health Act 1875 which provided open spaces owned by the community for the benefit of all, these words remind us of the efforts made by the people of Wimbledon to preserve the heart of Capability Brown's Wimbledon Park Estate. Celebrating its openness through the use of part as a golf course from at least 1898, and with developers eyeing every chance to build on the rest, in 1914 they obtained an Act of Parliament to buy and maintain the whole Estate as public open space.

Transferred to the new Borough of Merton in 1965, the Estate's public open space status was reconfirmed by legislation. Public resistance to a new lease of the golf course in 1986 forced Merton to regain control of the lake and introduce much more public access. In 1993 a massive public outcry tried to stop the sale to the AELTC, fearing just the development now proposed. A walkway around the lake and covenants never to develop were agreed, but this sale failed to overturn the public's rights to the open space. None of this should be consigned, as the developer would wish, to history or to a battle in the courts. What can we do?

We have power in the ballot box, as Council elections in 2022 illustrated. At Merton's Local Plan Inquiry (2022-4) we stopped the allocation of the Wimbledon Park Estate for development like the brownfield sites on the Broadway. How do we defeat a developer who can buy in massive corporate and legal resources? With knowledge, commitment and passion, skills and experience, we are exposing laws and obligations the developer denies, and inaccuracies in their publicity.

Through Save Wimbledon Park Ltd, Environmentalists have investigated, Architects have redesigned, Engineers and Mathematicians have recalculated, PR experts have told the story, Accountants and Bankers have organised the funds, Historians and Lawyers have researched and argued. Above all, the community has come together, just as it did in 1898, 1914, 1965, 1986 and 1993, but this time in even greater numbers and across Borough boundaries.

We have waved banners, crowded into Court and Council hearings, packed meetings and given generously. Young and old, from Gabriel to Thelma, we have shown our commitment.

When faced with opposition, property developers with no Plan B trot out the old jibe about “Nimby’s”, standing in the way of progress. Not so. Locals know their neighbourhood best. Inappropriate, unlawful development is happening all over the country. Wimbledon Park is one of 50 sites around London, protected but threatened, which local people are trying to preserve.

“Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty; power is ever stealing from the many to the few.” (Wendell Phillips, 1852, speech to the Anti-Slavery Society)

Thank you. We fight on ... for the environment, our children and grandchildren.

Trusting in a Trust

You may have heard about a “trust” of the golf course land and asked yourself “Why is this so important?”. Merton held it as if on trust for public access and recreation, to take effect at the end of the golf club lease.

Councils cannot sell such public land without advertisement and considering objections. In 2023 the Supreme Court ruled that failure to follow due process meant the buyer would still hold the land on the so-called “statutory trust”, allowing public access across the whole site.

The sale to the AELTC in 1993 should have followed this process but did not, as SWP’s research showed. The AELTC disputed this but did nothing until SWP continued to pursue the issue in the planning challenge. The AELTC now concede that their proposed development is incompatible with this “trust” and want to overrule the Supreme Court’s decision. Please come to the High Court in January to support the SWP campaign and learn more!

Christopher Coombe

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 Iain Simpson, the Chairman.

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Wimbledon Museum's new art exhibition explores the parallels between what happens to an object when it is put in a museum, and what happens when it becomes the subject of a work of art.

Thoughtfully presented and beautifully interpreted, *Objects of Enchantment* encourages visitors to pause, look closely and consider how the ordinary becomes extraordinary, and what happens when a simple object – a teacup, a toy, a chair – is lifted from daily life and placed on a museum plinth or turned into a painting.

Artist in residence Alastair Gordon turns his eye to the Museum's collection, reinterpreting familiar objects and inviting viewers to reconsider what makes something worthy of attention, revealing how context, perception and imagination can turn the mundane into the marvellous.

Alastair is a local artist who creates meticulously detailed paintings. His practice draws on the 17th-century *quodlibet* tradition of trompe-l'oeil, challenging viewers' perceptions of authenticity and artifice.

Wimbledon Museum is a small, independent museum proud to champion the history and people of Wimbledon's village, town and common.

The museum is open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 2:30 to 5pm, with free admission.

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40 Years Service in the Community



Paresh Modasia took ownership of D Parry Pharmacy on 15 October 1985 and recently celebrated 40 years serving the local residents of Wimbledon Park. He fondly remembers his predecessor, Mr Len White, saying that he “wouldn’t last two years” yet he’s still here more than 40 years later with his son, Sanil Modasia working alongside him.

According to Bernard Rondeau’s book (Wimbledon Park, from Private Park to Residential Suburb) the parade was originally built in 1909 and there has been a pharmacy at the site since 1910. Originally, Sarjeant Chemist, it became D. Parry Chemist in 1918 when Mr David Parry became the local pharmacist until 1960. Since then, it was run by Mr I Williams and Len White (1968-1985). When Paresh and his family took over in 1985, it became D Parry Pharmacy and continued the 110 year tradition of it having a family owned and run pharmacy in Wimbledon Park.

When Paresh first visited Wimbledon Park to view the pharmacy, Wimbledon Park Station had a sign of Railway as well as Underground so he thought the trains also stopped here too and it would be a busy place to have a pharmacy. He later learnt it was only the underground. Nonetheless, thankfully, it’s always been a busy parade.

Contd on page 24

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Traditionally, most pharmacies in Wimbledon used to close half days on Wednesdays but D Parry was open which helped draw patients in. After taking over, Paresh continued this tradition and to the delight of local residents and the GP surgery, also increased opening hours to help with local demand for good healthcare advice.

Nothing has changed there and the pharmacy team is still always on hand to help with any healthcare advice the local community needs. Over the last 40 years, Paresh and his team have always tried to be at the forefront of what they are able to offer patients in the pharmacy and not only dispensing prescriptions. From being one of the first pharmacies in London to offer a walk in flu vaccination service, to offering private clinical services such as Travel Vaccinations and Ear Microsuction amongst many others. The pharmacy is open Monday to Friday 9am-6pm and Saturday 9am-5pm and the team is always happy to help with anything you need.

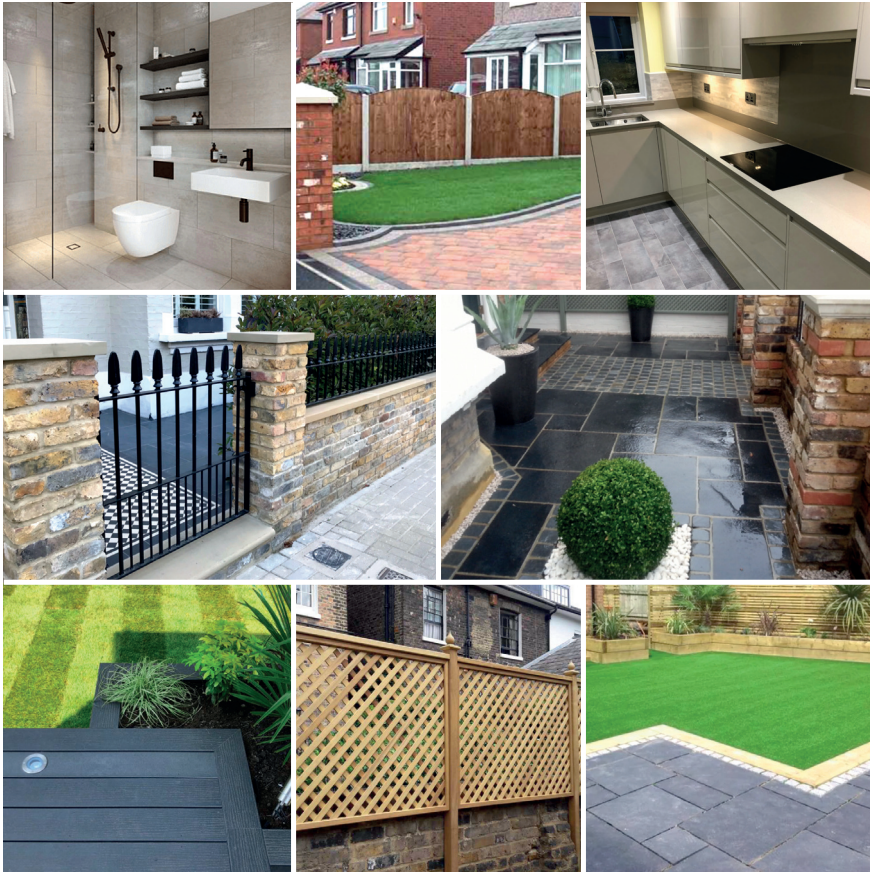
After moving into Wimbledon Park himself a few years after taking over, Paresh wanted to really get embedded into his new community. Not content with providing them with medication and healthcare advice, he also became an active member of the Wimbledon Park Residents Association and supports the local churches, mosques, temples and schools.

A lot has changed on our high street over the years and in an age where many high streets are struggling. It's great to see that for over 40 years we have had a Co-op, post office, hairdressers, newsagent, dentist, barber, bakers, coffee shop, estate agent and of course D Parry Pharmacy.

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Paul Kohler MP, addressing the WPRA AGM on the 29th October 2025





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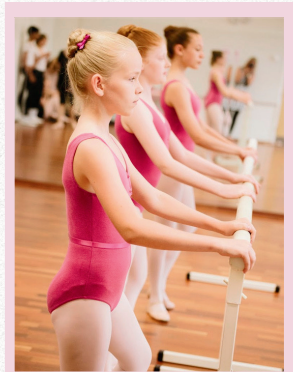
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Pamela Healy - Advertising/Planning/Newsletter	Brooklands Avenue
Paresh Modasia	Home Park Road
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Pre Primary Ballet (5-6yrs) 9:45am-10:30am

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Grade 2 Ballet (8yrs +) 11:15am-12:15pm

Grade 3 Ballet (10yrs +) 12:15pm-1:15pm



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