



Minutes

Merton Heritage Forum

Tuesday 6th October 2015

Merton Heritage Centre, 2nd floor, Morden Library, Merton Civic Centre

Present:

Cllr Nick Draper (Chair), Cllr Ian Munn, Cllr John Bowcott,
 Joyce Bellamy (MCGC&H, Mit.Soc, LHP>),
 John Hawks (Merton Priory Trust), Louise Crothall (LWLPS)
 Norman Plastow (Wim. Soc & Wimbledon Windmill)
 Cypren Edmond (High Path Community Association,)
 Duncan Rabagliati (Wool Rd and Ernle Rd Conservation area)
 Anthony Hopkins (LBM), Sarah Gould (Minutes) and Jill Tyndale (LBM)

Apologies:

Cllr Geraldine Stanford, Cllr Abdul Latif, John Strover (MCGC&H),
 Tony Burton and Sandra Vogel (MCGC&H),
 Tony Michael (Wimbledon Society), Paul McGarry (LBM)
 Nicholas Hart (Wandle Industrial Museum)
 John Veale (John Innes Society),
 John Davis (Mitcham Tree Wardens Group)

Item	Actions
<p>1. Minutes and matters arising from previous meeting:</p> <p>Further to discussion at the last meeting, NP noted that there have been no further developments regarding proposals to abolish the Grade II listing for historic buildings, or to transfer all monitoring responsibility from English Heritage to the local authority.</p> <p>IM emphasised the need to amend the Local List on the council website, particularly as the schedule of additions has already been approved by the Planning Committee. ND explained that there is a sticking point regarding recommendations for local listing of 34 – 40 Morden Road. Whilst discussions are ongoing, this property cannot be signed off. JT – voiced her concern that prolonged debate over this property was potentially risking the loss of other historic buildings which might otherwise be afforded protection through local listing.</p> <p>JT – referred to the electricity substation (Grade II) on Sunnyside. This is on the Heritage at Risk Register. This used to belong to the Wimbledon Power</p>	<p>Heritage Forum recommends that 34 – 40 Morden Rd. be removed from the schedule for local listing for the time being. The revised Local list can then be signed off by Cabinet.</p>

Company but is now in a poor state. She is keen for the Wimbledon Society to take ownership of this structure and its care. They would be able to apply for external funding to support maintenance work. NP explained that the Society had cleaned and repainted the structure some 40 years ago.

DR said that his organisation may be able to provide some financial support if the Wimbledon Society is prepared to assume responsibility for maintaining the former substation.

The group also discussed the condition of surviving metal pipework associated with historic structures at:

- a) the end of Murray Road (remains of the first ventilation pipe for the underground sewer) – NP reported this to be badly corroded.
- b) a site near the horse-trough next to Cricket Green – JT confirmed that this is in good condition but needs adding to the local list given its historic character.
- c) Raynes Park – JT referred to a metal pole which is a surviving part of the local trolley bus network.

2. Design processes:

JT went through the document “Design involvement in planning applications” and distributed copies to the group. (Copy attached to minutes.)

ND – Current Government policy is putting increasing pressure on local authorities. Officers and the Planning Committee are working hard to protect buildings of architectural merit.

JB pointed out that Conservation Areas assessments and character studies should help this.

JT reiterated that the Local List has value when the council is considering planning applications. Anyone can recommend properties for statutory listing and JT encourages this.

3. Carved in Stone Project Update / Heritage Discovery Day:

SG provided an update on the project, which is proceeding well. To date 28 volunteers (aged 15 – 70+) have worked on the project. These people come from all over Merton but the team also includes volunteers from Sutton and Wandsworth. Volunteers have been trained in local history research, digitisation, oral history work, use of camera and recording equipment, video and audio transcription.

The project has had several articles in the local media, on social media and school / stakeholder websites. SG thanked colleagues for their support with project promotion.

The CIS team have also taken part in a range of outreach at events including Mitcham Carnival and Wimbledon Village Fair – promoting the project and seeking information from the descendants of WW1 combatants and war workers.

NP and DR to progress this in conjunction with JT.

Volunteers have been undertaking a wide range of topic research into Merton's wartime history and have been working hard on producing biographies for local combatants. The initial project target is 500 biogs – 310 have been worked on to date.

2 new reader printers have been purchased – one for project use only, one for public access and SG encouraged group members to make use of this. Volunteers are using the machines to digitise and review wartime newspapers which are an untapped source of information for this period.

The project has had great support from local historians, King's College School, Rutlish School, Wimbledon and Merton parish churches. A wide range of resources are due to be shared. SG is particularly grateful to the Museum of Wimbledon for allowing access to its collections and use of some material for the CIS website. Project volunteers have also helped Museum staff by cataloguing WW1 material.

3 War Story Days were held at Morden Library, the Acacia Centre (Mitcham) and Wimbledon Studio Theatre. These featured talks, children's activities, handling sessions and archive film. 17 interviews were filmed with the descendants of war combatants and these are currently being transcribed. Further interview sessions are planned with day centres and the Dementia Hub. Such resources will be made accessible to the public in transcribed form and via the CIS website.

The team produced 3 mini maps charting WW1 sites around the borough – these were released for London Open House and have been well received. A more comprehensive Merton at War Heritage Trail will be released in Remembrance Week. To promote this, SG and colleagues are organising a guided walk around the Merton and Morden section of the Trail on November 7th (10.30 – 12.30) – starting at Colliers Wood Underground Station. Talks and displays will also be run at Morden Library on the afternoon of November 7th.

The CIS team has met with local teachers to discuss the project and the production of resource packs and classroom sessions for schools. The response was good and teachers are happy to use WW1 resources but these will need to be tailored to meet the needs of the school curriculum.

A conservator has been appointed to work on WW1 material within the Heritage collection. Townsweb Archiving Ltd has been appointed as the web contractor and is working with the CIS team to produce a range of web resources. These will form a sub section of the Merton Memories website and will allow access to a range of themed pages, plus combatant biographies, contemporary documents and guidance on WW1 collections across Merton. The webpages are due for launch in May 2016.

SG informed the group that the CIS web launch will be combined with the 2016 Heritage Discovery day in an event scheduled for Saturday May 21st 2016. As per Merton Memories the morning will allow for set up, prior to an official reception. Discovery day activities will follow in the afternoon. SG would like to

**SG to circulate
publicity material
for Heritage Walk**

**Group members to
contact SG if they
would like to have a
stall, or could offer**

invite local heritage groups and attractions to take part in the event (14 groups were involved in the 2015 event.)
It would be good to maintain a WW1 themes but this need not be exclusive – groups could display sale books about the period, offer a related talk, or add WW1 photos to their stall displays (where feasible.)

ND was very pleased with the progress of the project and passed on his thanks to the project team. He encouraged forum members to think of ways in which their services / teams could work with the Heritage Service in the future.

4. HLF Update.

AH gave an update on HLF projects in the borough. These were previously recorded in a separate list but now form part of the work plan section of the new Heritage Strategy. In recent years Merton has been an HLF priority borough, having had limited amounts of grant funding. However promotional work and additional HLF officer support has resulted in an increased number of bids from LBM and community groups. Over the past 3 – 4 years Merton has been awarded £8 million in funding and the borough's priority status is likely to expire by the end of this year. AH and ND encouraged groups to submit project bids during the remaining months, as HLF offers valuable advice and officer support to priority boroughs. SG pointed out that projects do not have to be large – HLF will also provide up to £10K for smaller initiatives and this can be a valuable springboard to subsequent funding applications. AH encouraged forum members to submit further bids and actions for the Heritage Strategy work plan.

JH referred to lack of movement regarding proposals for a funding bid for the Wheelhouse at Merton Abbey Mills. Ownership is the major sticking point as a 5 year clear tenure is required before a funding bid can be made. The Council still has 2 years left with the proposal for Wandle Heritage to take on a new lease for the property either before or after the 2 years has expired.

5. The Canons – project update (discussion postponed)

6. Heritage Strategy Work Plan:

AH reminded the group of the commitment to focus on a Work Plan objective at each future Forum meeting and to undertake a detailed review. Forum members can discuss work currently under way but are also welcome to identify new projects for addition to what is an evolving strategic plan.

AH asked group members to note the items currently included in the work plan, submit comments where relevant and to offer a brief update on their own projects at the next meeting.

JB – reported that the Cricket Green area had received a Level 5 award as an outstanding neighbourhood. The council Parks Dept, was commended for the standard of its planting in this area. The White Hart and Windmill pubs had also been presented to a high standard. Jovan Foods had also restored the flowerbeds near their site. The Forum commended MCGC&H on the neighbourhood award.

an activity / talk at the Discovery Day. Initial details to be supplied by November 6th.

ND and JH to meet with James McGinlay and Terry Buckland to take this matter forward.

Jil Hall to give an update at the next meeting.

Forum members to provide a project update for the next meeting.

JT - Raynes Park High Street has been recommended for a Great British High Street award.

JB – In the national Civic Voice awards MCGC&H were commended for their work in cleaning historic structures in the Cricket Green area.

DR – asked if the hexagonal postbox near King’s College School is a listed structure.

7 and 8: Partner Updates and AOB:

JB – The Cricket Green area has taken part in the London in Bloom and Merton in Bloom awards.

JH – Phase 1 of the Chapterhouse improvements are in progress – there has been a slight delay as Merton Priory Trust does not have money of its own, or the necessary spending powers to commission an architect. JH felt it unfortunate that a project representative was not at the Forum meeting.

CE – the High Path Community Association has been working with Sustainable Merton to plant and maintain Nelson Gardens. Members spent much of a Saturday session planting fruit trees and vegetables. CE has put forward a request for funding from the Hay Association for additional work.

CE – feels it is important to involve schools in local heritage and to raise awareness of local associations e.g. Nelson.

SG confirmed that schools are being involved with the Carved in Stone Project and that educational resources produced for Merton Memories have also featured significant people / events (including Nelson) as requested by teachers.

ND – Circle Housing will also seek to raise awareness of the Nelson link as part of the new High Path development.

CE – asked if there had been any follow up to the group visit to Liberty & fashion. Liberty are undertaking extensive rebranding and CE wonders if they could be persuaded to return to Merton, particularly Merton Abbey Mills. This will depend on buyer interest.

NP – updated the group regarding recent damage to Wimbledon windmill. Fundraising for repairs and improvement work is complicated as the museum leases the building but the Commons conservators are the freeholders. Many of the current conservators have more interest in the Putney Heath area and new conservators are not due to be elected for some time.

LC – The Living Wandle project has produced a Wandle Treasures map with the help of local volunteers and Building Exploratory. Resources will be available online but a home will ultimately be needed for the hard copy map which features a hand drawn tour of historic treasures along the Wandle Valley. The map may need to be framed but LC would like suggestions for an appropriate home. The group suggested Merton Civic Centre, Morden Hall and

JT to respond.

Members to contact LC with any other suggestions.

Merton Abbey Mills as possibilities.

As part of Module 3 the Living Wandle Project has mapped various walks and mills, working in conjunction with Wandle Industrial Museum. The project team now need to consider how to reshape the project, to avoid duplication of work and to identify future pieces of work. LC would like suggestions for appropriate people to invite to attend a meeting on this subject. The project covers 4 boroughs but much of the work is Merton focussed.

The Wandle Valley Regional Park website is being redeveloped and digitised historic images are needed. These can show any period, site, street, industry or aspect of the Wandle – if included on the site, they will be fully acknowledged and not available for downloadable.

LC – told the group about the Wandle Valley Photographic Project – members of the public are being encouraged to submit photos of the river, people, places or activities taking place along the Wandle. The closing date is 16 October. The winner will receive £600 worth of camera equipment.

JB – Wimbledon Common has been awarded Best Common by London in Bloom. Mitcham and Wimbledon usually enter in alternate years.

JB also reminded the group about the Wandle Futures event scheduled to take place at Vestry Hall on 17 October (2.30 – 6pm).

JT – is the link person for Historic England. (English Heritage has now been split into Historic England (with responsibility for listed buildings) and the English Heritage Trust (caring for properties belonging to English Heritage.)

Historic England produces a monthly newsletter - they have recently been looking for post-war pubs of distinction and are also looking at libraries.

JT also informed the group that Historic England is reviewing archaeological priority areas – a meeting will be held on this in due course. The proposed changes are extending some of the current zones – for instance all of High Path will be covered in a new priority zone. LBM will need to put forward a strong argument if it is felt that the new proposals should not be accepted.

IM pointed out that acceptance may require redrafting of the Merton's Core Proposals document.

DR – queried council policy on the cutting of grass verges in conservation areas – is this done regularly or infrequently?

ND explained that in many areas mowing is only now undertaken twice per year.

DR recommended that the Green Spaces team approaches property owners near such verges and encourages them to adopt and care for the space, including regular mowing.

**Date of next meeting: Tuesday 16 February 2016,
Merton Heritage Centre, 7 – 8.30pm.**

Please contact LC with any recommendations for suitable contacts.

Group members to contact LC if you can supply images.