

RAWW NEWS

September 2019

The Residents' Association of West Wimbledon www.raww.org.uk

The RAWW AGM will take place on Tuesday 15th October at St Matthew's Church hall, Spencer Road Raynes Park. Refreshments will be served from 7.30. The meeting will start at 8.00pm.

The guest speaker will be **John Stewart**. John is the Chairman of HACAN, the long-established organisation which gives a voice to residents under the Heathrow flight paths. This will be an excellent opportunity to get a better understanding of the Heathrow expansion proposals and the impact on us. He will also be able to explain whatever is then known about the recent increase in aircraft noise in our area and anything we can do about it.

Air traffic (out of) control

Background

Aircraft noise from Heathrow is a growing problem for West Wimbledon. Currently, the area suffers badly when the wind is from the east and planes take off over our area heading to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) has plans to increase the number of planes using the airport by over 50% which would mean an increase of more than 250,000 planes per year which is about 700 *extra* planes per day. Despite the claims by HAL and the Department for Transport (DfT), it is intuitively obvious that we will suffer more noise pollution and the air quality will be degraded and the economic case for expansion is questionable. DfT documents showed that the Government expects 973,000 households around Heathrow to experience increased daytime noise by 2050 after a third runway is built. The documents released by Heathrow as part of its expansion 'consultation' show that there is a significant risk that West Wimbledon will be very adversely affected by aircraft noise.

Recent Increase in noise in West Wimbledon

Many residents have already detected an increase in aircraft noise. Planes taking off from Heathrow have been flying much closer to our area, often directly overhead, since spring this year. RAWW was originally advised that the increase in noise was due to an 'error' that has shifted the flight path slightly to the south. This is now being denied and we are variously told that it is due to 'a recent adjustment to the navigation coding system' or 'the evolution of navigational technology on planes'.

We suspect that what is really happening is that Heathrow are testing the ability of aircraft to stay within the permitted 3km wide corridor if they are instructed to follow a path close to the southern limit. This is possibly all about testing ways to maximise the increase in the number of flights before the 3rd runway is built.

Our best course of action is to continue to make complaints about the increase in noise and ask why the planes are flying further south.

If you would like to register a complaint about aircraft noise you can do so by emailing noise@heathrow.com or comment online at <https://www.heathrow.com/noise/what-you-can-do/make-a-complaint-about-noise>

If you email, we suggest you copy the email to Stephen Hammond at Stephen.hammond.mp@parliament.uk.

Please share responses from Heathrow with RAWW at enquiries@raww.org.uk.

New flight paths over West Wimbledon

Changes to landing flight paths to make more intensive use of the existing two runways are planned to start in 2022. They are not dependent on the 3rd runway being built. These changes may result in new flight paths over West Wimbledon for aircraft that are landing, with potentially 25 of those between 6am and 7am when the wind is coming from the west. That is 70% of the time. Changes to landing flight paths when the third runway is in use could result in 47 flights per hour over our area.

These proposed changes were subject to consultation earlier this year. RAWW and many residents provided information to demonstrate why there should be no flight path over West Wimbledon. Nothing has been published so far on the outcome of this consultation.

Recent Consultation on Heathrow Expansion

The most recent consultation contained plans for the third runway and its associated infrastructure. It detailed the impact a new runway is likely to have

on the economy, local communities and the wider environment. If the plans are implemented as proposed the number of flights using the airport is expected to increase from 480,000 a year to 505,000 in 2026, and, ultimately, to 750,000. HAL will submit its final proposals to a Planning Inquiry which is expected to start in the middle of 2020. The Inquiry inspectors will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport who will decide whether to give the go-ahead. If given the green light, HAL hopes to open the third runway in 2026.

RAWW and many residents responded making clear that they opposed the third runway. Comments on some of the specific proposals for operating the airport with a third runway were made but with the statement that this didn't in any way mean endorsement of the third runway. One topic of specific concern for West Wimbledon, and all areas to the east of the airport, is 'directional preference'. At present Heathrow operates what is known as 'westerly preference'. This means that for most of the time planes take off over the less populated area to the west of the airport and come into land from the east. Heathrow is now proposing to move to 'managed preference'. This would mean that there is a significant risk that West Wimbledon would suffer with aircraft noise more of the time. RAWW responded that the westerly directional preference should be maintained.

RAWW will continue to update residents on developments via its regular emails.

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Morley Park is finally open!

Morley Park is in West Wimbledon, between Copse Hill and Cottenham Park Road. It has been leased to Merton Council by Berkeley Homes as part of the requirements of the planning consent for Wimbledon Hill Park. It comprises playing fields, a pavilion, woodland and meadow. The playing fields and pavilion are leased to the Ursuline High School. The foot and cycle path between Cottenham Park Road and Copse Hill (the north/south path), and the car park accessed from Cottenham Park Road, are also part of the park although not fenced within it. The cottage adjacent to the pavilion is also leased to the Council and the rental income from it will be used for the maintenance and improvement of the park.



On 4th May 2019, the park was officially opened by Merton's Mayor, Mary Curtin. The park was not looking at its best on this unseasonably cold and occasionally very wet day, but spirits were high as the park was officially opened for the public and the Ursuline High School to enjoy. After decades of campaigning by local groups to create the park this marked the start of a new era.

However, uncertainty surrounds the Council's long-term security of tenure of the park. The planning consent that created Morley Park required the freehold to be transferred to the Council, but the Council has now accepted it on a 22-year lease instead. The Council has, so far, refused a Freedom of Information Act request from the Friends of Morley Park (FOMP) for a copy of the lease. Consequently, we do not know what will happen at the end of the 22 years. FOMP was told in February 2019 that "the lease will contain a binding commitment, subject only to the Council's acceptance, to transfer the freehold to the Council. This commitment will be in the form of an option agreement which the Council can exercise at any time in the final 24 months of the lease." The only reason that has ever been given for accepting a lease instead of the freehold is that it was in order to avoid the Council taking on liability for the knotweed. We now know that the Council is taking on the responsibility for treating the Japanese Knotweed from the end of September 2020. The lack of transparency on the lease combined with this information about the Japanese Knotweed has created uncertainty and concern about the long-term future of our park.

The summer flowering meadow has been beautiful and attracted lots of visitors who are delighted by this wild flower and wildlife haven. The Ursuline High School is making good use of the playing fields, and joggers have discovered the trim trail around them. Walking or cycling along the path between Cottenham Park Road and Copse Hill is like being on a country lane. Please help the Friends of Morley Park to protect and improve our beautiful new public park by becoming a Friend. It is very easy to join online using their website.

<https://www.friendsofmorleypark.org.uk/join>

Redevelopment of the Wolfson Site

Work continues on the redevelopment of the site of the former Wolfson Rehabilitation Centre on Copse Hill. This is a very sensitive site within the Copse Hill Conservation Area, bounded to the south and west by the recently opened Morley Park which is Metropolitan Open Land, to the south and east by woodland which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and to the east by the locally listed former Atkinson Morley Hospital. This is a very dense, town centre style development of 75 apartments in seven 4 and 5 storey blocks which is very much out of character with the surrounding area.

Over the last year, work has focused on completing the concrete frames of the apartment blocks and commencing the building of the facades, roofs and internal fit-out. A new sales and marketing suite opened in one of the new blocks in July. Berkeley Homes say they are on target to complete the development by summer 2020.



RAWW has been monitoring progress closely to ensure Berkeley Homes complies with the

planning consents. We have raised several concerns with them and the planners including:

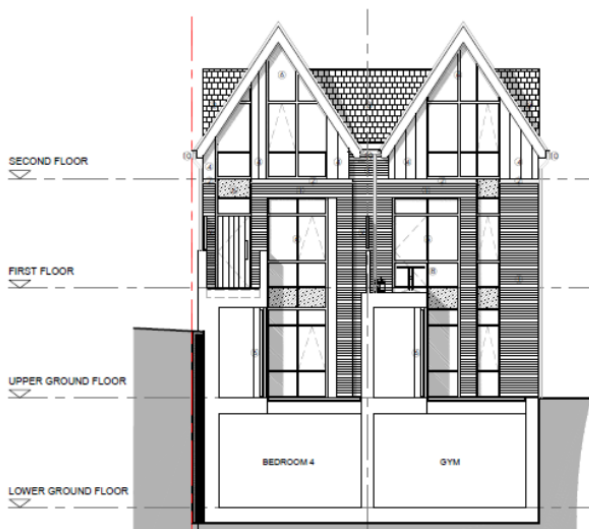
- the proposal to add unsightly equipment and appendages to the roofs of certain of the blocks which increases the roofline heights above those originally permitted.
- the plans to create additional parking spaces (some serving the new sales and marketing suite) which pose a threat to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists using the adjacent north/south path as well as the health of certain trees.
- errors, omissions and inconsistencies in several plans and documents submitted by Berkeley Homes to discharge certain planning conditions.
- the inclusion of a 17 square metre strip of park land within the permanent boundary of the site.
- the occupation of parts of the adjacent Morley Park to facilitate construction works.
- safety issues associated with heavy vehicles accessing and leaving the site via the gates on Atkinson Close and the use of the suspended parking bays on Copse Hill for visitors to the original sales and marketing suite rather than for the intended purpose as a vehicle holding area.
- unapproved landscaping works (including the felling of two trees) in a part of Morley Park that borders the site which improve the aspect from the new apartments and their saleability at the expense of the parkland and its wildlife.

The changing face of West Wimbledon

It isn't just the town centre style Wolfson development that is bringing massive change to the character of our area. Detached houses sitting in generous gardens and backland sites which would previously have been considered too small or unsuitable for residential development are regularly targeted by developers.

Applications/approvals since September 2018

41 Cottenham Park Road - Plans to demolish the existing low-level detached house and squeeze in two very narrow and much taller (four storey) houses were approved last November despite objections. The developer advertised the houses for sale off plan, but the site is now back on the market.



2a Amity Grove – This is the derelict building at the bottom of Amity Grove that was most recently used as a language school. Recently permission has been granted for a building at the back in the area that was formerly used as a car park. It will provide

three small dwellings. Permission was previously granted to convert the existing building to provide 11 flats. There is a current application to add a floor to provide another three flats. This picture gives an idea of what it would look like. RAWW has written to object to this latest application on the grounds of the increased height and dominance of the street scene.



36 Durham Road, Forest Bailiff – Permission was granted, and works are now in progress, to extend the back of the existing building to create two flats and build a detached two bed dwelling on the land at the back. This continues a trend for development at the back of the Durham Road shops. There will still be a shop but smaller.

Garage site at 164 Durham Road (by the 200 bus stop) - Approval for a single storey dwelling was granted on this very cramped site in December 2018 despite objections from RAWW and others.

Redevelopment site - Amity Grove Health Centre

The building has been unused for some years and the NHS declared it surplus to requirements around three years ago. We do not know the current ownership. The draft Local Plan identifies this as a potential development site and proposes shared community and residential use. There hasn't been any planning application yet.

Grant Fuller of FULLER GILBERT

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RAWW Updates

RAWW sends out e-mail updates to residents as issues arise. Quite often the e-mails are about issues where a quick response is required, so e-mail is the ideal method of communication.

All RAWW members who provide an e-mail address will automatically be added to this list.

Crossrail 2 and Rainbow

The most recent estimated cost for Crossrail 2 was £41bn against the 2014 budget of £30bn. The decision of whether to proceed with the project will ultimately be taken by Parliament and such a decision may well be several years away.

The background of the Elizabeth Line running over two years late with additional costs and the debate over HS2 is not encouraging for Crossrail2. The

proposed Sutton link to Merton (tram or rapid bus) will be competing for funds at about the same time.

The safeguarding of land for the project has not progressed beyond Lower Downs Road, so developers are increasingly busy looking at sites west of that point which might otherwise have been needed for Crossrail2. The Rainbow Estate, next to Raynes Park station, has planning permission for a development much of which would be residential, but the position is complicated by Network Rail owning the sole entrance to the site.

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The Wimbledon Masterplan

At the 2018 RAWW AGM, we heard about the first draft of the Wimbledon Masterplan which will offer guidance to inform and shape new developments in Wimbledon. The consultation raised issues about the nature, function and scale of the town, as well as highlighting concerns around development quality and the impact of Crossrail 2. Changes being addressed following the consultation include:

- revising downward the suggested building heights and refining the suggested massing.
- enhancing the design guidance chapter to focus more on the principles of good urban design and how applicants need to respond to this.
- revising the public realm and open space sections giving clarity around the public realm improvements.

The final Masterplan consultation is scheduled for 30 September – 11 November 2019 prior to adoption in December 2019.

2019/20 Subscriptions for renewals Due Now - New Members Welcome

The RAWW annual subscription is £5 per household. Your subscription and any additional donations you can make will go directly towards assisting our campaigning activities to protect your environment on your behalf.

To join online or if you are an existing member and wish to pay your subscription online: Please go to our website www.raww.org.uk/join.

Alternatively, to join or pay to renew your membership, you can complete the subscription/donation amounts below and the form overleaf and return it to Sarah Field, RAWW Membership Secretary, 57 Cottenham Park Road, London SW20 0DR, or email this information to membership@raww.org.uk. For all bank transfer and standing order payments please use the first 4 letters of your last name and your house number as reference.

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RAWW contact details

If you have any questions or comments about the articles in the Newsletter, would like to know how you can help to protect the local area, or for enquiries about anything except membership you can contact the RAWW committee at: enquiries@raww.org.uk

Please send any membership enquiries to: membership@raww.org.uk

RAWW Committee members:

Jane Barnes, Sarah Field, Max Gladwyn, Pat Keith, Myfanwy Morgan, James Oliver, Keith Thomas, Nigel Ware

RAWW Membership Form

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