

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

For the benefit of Mitcham Cricket Green
Conservation Area and its environs

Annual Review 2018





*Our stand at the Merton Heritage
Discovery Day in May*

We were all delighted to see Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area come fourth in a national poll to find England's favourite Conservation Area, run by the charity for England's civic societies, Civic Voice. When you consider that there are more than ten thousand Conservation Areas in England this is a really exceptional achievement, and proves what we know locally – Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area is an absolute gem that's well worth all the hard work and effort people put in to look after it.

We continue to work closely with Merton Council on The Canons Lottery funded project. This has now entered the 'delivery phase', with a community engagement officer and a project manager employed by Merton Council. We sit

on the project steering group alongside Mitcham Society and Friends of the Canons. We expect the Friends to grow in number and take a central role in developing volunteers and activities that care for The Canons in the long term.

The situation surrounding Mitcham Cricket Club's pavilion and the Burn Bullock site has been challenging. In June there was a public exhibition showing a 70 bedroom hotel proposed in the car park, refurbishment of the Grade II listed Burn Bullock pub as a pub/restaurant, and works to improve and extend the cricket pavilion. Unfortunately the scheme included no commitments to fund or deliver the cricket pavilion improvements. While we were in regular contact with the site owners throughout the year, there was little to report by way of progress. We continue to work with and support Mitcham Cricket Club on this crucially important topic.

Returning to happier themes I am delighted to report that our two key public events of the year, our July Community on the Green event and our September Mitcham Heritage Day, both go from strength to strength.

At Community on the Green we enjoyed a balmy evening socialising with local people and celebrating what makes our Conservation Area so special. We welcomed representatives of The Canons project and Wandle Industrial Museum, and provided a guided tree walk.

Mitcham Heritage Day is our own local heritage festival. This year it was spread across numerous venues in Mitcham which hosted a variety of exhibitions and activities, and provided the chance to see inside buildings that are usually closed to the public. This spectacular day was a feast of heritage for local people, and also saw us participate in Wandle Fortnight and the national Heritage Open Days programme. My personal thanks to everyone who volunteered their time and their venues to support this day.

As we enter our Conservation Area's 50th anniversary year, we know it is as important as it has ever been to have a strong local voice supported by active volunteers who care about, and speak up for, everything the Conservation Area stands for.

I thank everyone who has contributed during the course of the year.

John Stover

Trustee & Chair, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Local natural environment & Friends of the Canons



The horse trough at Jubilee Corner, which is cared for by one of our members

2018 was a challenging year for the natural environment. A wet spring was followed by an abnormally warm and dry summer that put extreme stress on trees. Not only were new plantings at risk from lack of water, but even mature specimens, including evergreens, struggled for sufficient moisture and succumbed. Where dead street trees had been replaced by the council, volunteers across the borough routinely watered the newly planted trees, with varying degrees of success. Sadly, the preferred out-sourced contractor was only seen with water bowsers on Mitcham streets when the dry spell had ended.

We are blessed in Cricket Green ward with plenty of greenspace that enhances the natural landscape.

However, the wet spring had a disastrous effect on all grassed areas within the Conservation Area. During a particularly wet morning, the first cut of the year

took place. The consequence was wet clumps of mown material being pressed into the ground by the tractor wheels. When the weather changed from wet to warm and dry, these clumps baked hard, allowing no space for the grass beneath. The hot spell had little long-term effect on grass, which can withstand long periods without water. However the clumps of compressed cuttings killed large swathes of grass, especially noticeable on the west lawn of The Canons, on Cricket Green opposite the Police station, and on the out-field of the cricket pitch which resembled a moss, weed and earth patch. There was no reseeding of damaged areas.



One of the Conservation Area road signs, surrounded by greenery

2018 was a really successful year for Friends of the Canons. We bid for, and were successful in “winning” three lots. Within days of each other during the summer, shrubs had been donated for distribution to charities and volunteer groups by the Hampton Court Flower Show, and Wimbledon Tennis. A good range of shrubs were selected and planted out during a workday. We are delighted to report that these plants survived the heat, thanks to copious watering by volunteers, and have really lifted the walled garden, both within the formal displays, and, more strikingly, outside the garden wall in a bed that had become rather bare. In the autumn we were given a range of bulbs by Taylor & Sons, courtesy of The Metropolitan Public Gardens Association, under the “Bulbs for London” scheme. These too were successfully planted both in The Canons walled garden and at Lower Green West. More tulip bulbs were planted at The Canons thanks to a donation of material.

We are aware that these new plantings may be temporary due to the Lottery funded revamp of The Canons site. Prime amongst the landscape changes will be a replanting of the walled garden. We shall strive to ensure that the donated plants referred to above are respected or moved to a new location. We have built a good relationship with the landscape contractor, so are confident our wishes will be acted upon.

Amongst other newly planted saplings were a number that had been donated by Friends of the Canons. These had been earmarked for a triangle of overlooked land on Lower Green West, a patch adopted by Friends of the Canons to manage. The aim was to keep some of the “weeds” that attracted insects, and intersperse these with new plants. The dry hot spell meant that containers of water had to be transported to the spot to keep plants alive.

Regrettably, during an over-zealous campaign of “clean-up”, the contractor trimmed everything to ground level, killing all the new shrubs. (In 2019 the

contractor did promise to replace the lost plants, but the effort to keep the originals alive during the heatwave remained unrewarded.)

Friends of The Canons meets once a month for a workday – on the 3rd Sunday of each month at 10.00, usually by The Canons house. Check the monthly MCGC&H notes for updates, or join the group for free and help safeguard this Mitcham treasure. There is no better time to sign, with the Lottery funded regeneration of the site gathering momentum.

John Davis

Trustee & Vice Chair, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
Chair, Friends of the Canons

Landscape & townscape

MCGC&H



Tommy at the now Grade II listed War Memorial on Lower Green West

Back in 2013 when contributing to the London Borough of Merton's Draft Planning Policies consultation, we noted that the list of historic structures of graded status lacked any reference to Mitcham's outdoor war memorials, despite the fact that English Heritage (as it was still called at that time), the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the War Memorials Trust, liaising to ensure a coordinated response to the imminent commemoration of the World War I centenary, were suggesting that all individual designed war memorials should receive at least Grade II status.

Having drawn the attention of these organisations and the Borough to this omission, MCGC&H undertook the necessary research that led to the civic memorial on Lower Green West receiving Grade II status in 2018.

The memorial and associated gravestones which are in the usual format for such burial places, and hence not being unique, in the Parish Churchyard remained at the locally listed level which we had already pursued for them.

We welcome closure of the waste facility and removal of its lorries from our streets. The principle of residential development is also welcome but the new neighbourhood needs to feel like a natural extension of Mitcham based around streets and houses and avoid high rise tower blocks.

It was a difficult year for Mitcham cricket pavilion and the Burn Bullock where development plans for a new hotel raised uncertainty over the future of the pavilion. We were pleased to secure national media coverage and unanimous support from all political parties on Merton Council and our local MP for the pavilion being secured in community hands. We will campaign tirelessly with Mitcham Cricket Club until this is achieved.

Enforcement of planning safeguards continues to be an Achilles heel at Merton Council and we pressed for action on illegal parking, unauthorised development, fly tips and problems caused by the school run. We also highlighted the problems caused by a growing proliferation of estate agent boards as more flats are developed.



Transformation of The Wilson into a local care and wellbeing centre was frustrated by delays

It was a year of unfulfilled anticipation at both the Wilson, where further delays emerged, and The Canons where the multi-million pound Lottery funded project led by Merton Council got off to a slow start. We are promised much more activity in 2019.

We stood up against damaging development proposals that included a block of flats behind the listed White Hart that would be seen above it. We welcomed rejection of plans which would have damaged one of Mitcham's rare weatherboarded cottages and secured commitments from all the candidates in the

local elections to care for the Conservation Area.

We were delighted to help Cricket Green to become the nation's fourth most popular Conservation Area out of more than 10,000 in England and are now looking forward to the 50th anniversary celebrations.

Tony Burton
Trustee and Secretary, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Maintaining communications with our members and with the wider public is something we do on an ongoing basis throughout the year. During 2018 we posted regularly to our web site, keeping all those who either visit or sign up for email alerts up to date, while we kept in touch with more than a thousand followers through Twitter, and responded regularly to requests for our views from local media.

Our Bulletin was distributed to 4,000 local homes by an army of member volunteers, and our eleven monthly meetings during the year (every month except December) each brought enough people together to fill Mitcham Cricket Pavilion. These meetings give people an opportunity have their say on projects and initiatives we are involved with, from current planning applications to council strategy consultations and beyond.

We took to the wider stage in May, joining in with the Merton Heritage Discovery Day held at the Civic Centre, where our stall was packed full of information and our talk, on the topic of “Discovering The Canons and Mitcham Cricket Green” was given to a full house.



Mitcham Heritage Day 2018 saw more participating organisations than ever and hundreds of visits

In July we welcomed local people to our Community on the Green event, part of the focus of which was a photo call of local people in support of Mitcham Cricket Club, whose ongoing work to secure the future of the pavilion you can read about elsewhere in this Annual Review.

On Saturday 8th September Mitcham Heritage Day saw ten organisations provide exhibitions, activities, guided walks, the opportunity to see inside buildings not usually open to the public, refreshments and, of course, cricket. The event took place on the opening weekend of Wandle Fortnight and was part of the England-wide

Heritage Open Days celebration. We are grateful to all the participating organisations, and especially to all the volunteers who made the day another great success.

We were thrilled to play a part in helping Cricket Green Conservation Area come fourth in a national poll to find England’s Favourite Conservation Area. The poll, run by Civic Voice, the national umbrella body for civic societies in England,

assessed 249 applications from more than 10,000 Conservation Areas in England, deciding on a shortlist of 18. We ran an intensive campaign over the two week voting period, and were rewarded with fourth place.

It is things like Community on the Green, Mitcham Heritage Day and the Civic Voice poll that show us Mitcham Cricket Green - both the Conservation Area and its environs - are special not only locally but also nationally, and that the area we care for so much really does warrant all the effort and energy that local people give it by volunteering their time.

Much of our communications work is a joint effort, and members volunteer their time to deliver bulletins, run events, and assist behind the scenes. Without this our reach would be much smaller, and I thank everyone who gives their time to help.

Sandra Vogel
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Mitcham Cricket Club

MCGC&H



Local people and politicians join together to support Mitcham Cricket Club

Our first season under new President David Smith has seen huge highs and lows.

There have been developments in the battle for the future of our pavilion. We are engaged in discussions which, for the first time in a decade, could potentially lead to a resolution and ideally secure the freehold of our current footprint.

Our landlords started to consult in June on a proposal for the site including a hotel development in the back carpark, restoration of the Burn Bullock and reconfiguration of the cricket club portion of the land. The proposal would reduce the footprint of the cricket club and require demolition of our equipment shed.

We appealed for help via twitter and were heartened to receive messages of support from former England cricket captains, celebrities and local politicians.

TV crews descended on the green and local and national newspapers covered the story. Thanks in part to the publicity, leaders of the political parties on Merton Council and our local MP pledged to block any redevelopment that doesn't provide a sustainable future for cricket in Mitcham. We remain indebted to MCGC&H officers for their leadership and guidance in ongoing negotiations.

On the field our 2nd XI enjoyed a successful year back in the Surrey Championship and at one stage threatened another promotion. In the end our three sides finished broadly mid-table (6th, 4th and 5th respectively).

Our junior sides also had a good season, with our U16s runners-up in the Beddington Festival and our U14s runners-up in their league. Three of our U14 players were selected to represent the League XI, one of them as captain of the side. We offered more cricket for younger juniors with another successful year of All Stars cricket for 5 to 8 year olds, and U10 friendlies. In the attention following the launch of our campaign for survival, we were proud to see our juniors speak passionately to the media on how important the club is to them.

Our new Ladies team had a lively inaugural season and we hope to grow numbers in 2019. Despite all the off-the-field challenges we continue to make progress in implementing our Development Plan. Notable achievements include the restoration of artificial net facilities.



The Lashings World XI come to Mitcham

One of the highlights of the year was bringing the Lashings World XI to Mitcham. It was fantastic to see Mitcham CC take the field against former international players and there was a great spirit throughout the day. The game was part of a fundraising weekend which included our Awards Night and a successful first ever Comedy Night.

Before the season had started our pavilion was struck by "the Beast from the East" which caused burst pipes and a major flood which caused extensive damage. I must

thank the MCGC&H members who helped with staunching the leak, drying everything out and repairing the damage.

The Club appreciates the ongoing efforts of MCGC&H to support our operations and to help us secure our future. Thank you all.

David Bell
MCGC&H Liaison, Mitcham Cricket Club



2018 saw the beginning of a major review of Merton Council's Local Plan.

We set out our stall in a major submission which identified sites for development, established our design expectations, and specified the shopping parades, green spaces, community facilities, employment sites and footpaths we want to see protected.

Our submission, and much more about our work, is on our web site – mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk

Tony Burton
Trustee and Secretary, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage is the civic society for the Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area and its environs. We are part of the wider civic movement through membership of the national charity Civic Voice.

Membership costs £10 a year.

More information about us is at www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk

Summary of accounts

MCGC&H

	Year ended 31.12.18 £	Year ended 31.12.17 £
INCOME		
Memberships – New	70	85
Subscriptions – Life	200	100
Subscriptions – Ordinary	605	625
Donations & one-off grants	117	492
Bank deposit interest received gross	13	7
Sales	670	25
Social fund receipts	508	352
Golf tournament & lunch	0	1534
Total Income	<u>£2,183</u>	<u>£3,220</u>
LESS: EXPENDITURE		
Sundry expenses + Meetings and secretarial expenses	745	702
Linked organisations subscriptions	127	133
Group Insurance	194	190
Bank charges	0	72
Community-on-the-Green & Mitcham Heritage Day	78	155
Donations	0	1326
Total Expenditure	<u>£1,144</u>	<u>£2,578</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS	£1,039	£642
Retained surplus brought forward	£6,474	£5,832
RETAINED SURPLUS C/FWD	<u>£7,513</u>	<u>£6,474</u>
Grants brought forward / received	£4,241	£9,685
Less grants expended	£1,268	£5,944
Restricted funds available	<u>£2,973</u>	<u>£3,741</u>
Deposit Account	£2,932	£2,919

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
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