



*Deputy Mayor of Merton
Edward Foley cuts the cake at
Community on the Green*

Cricket Green Conservation Area was one of the first to be designated, and in 2019 we celebrated our 50th birthday. We brought local people together on the actual date, 18th July, at our Community on the Green event, and enjoyed a specially made anniversary cake. It was a suitably lovely summer evening, and lots of people came along to help us mark the occasion.

This wasn't the only way we marked our anniversary. Throughout the year we tweeted 50 things people had put forward that make Cricket Green Conservation Area special. We also renewed the Cricket Green Charter having consulted widely with local people, including through a public workshop.

To provide a physical marker of our Golden Jubilee we joined with Friends of the Canons volunteers to plant a golden privet hedge around two sides of the cricket ground. As the hedge grows and matures this birthday present from us to the Conservation Area will provide a lasting reminder of how much people care about Cricket Green.

These celebrations were an excellent follow-on from having been voted the fourth favourite Conservation Area in England out of a total of more than ten thousand – in a public vote organised in 2018 by our national charity Civic Voice.

I am delighted that Mitcham Heritage Day continues to grow and to flourish. With new participants this year including Mitcham Golf Club and Mary Tate Cottages, hundreds of people enjoyed the opportunity to see some of the wonderful heritage that surrounds us. Running events like this is without doubt the more pleasurable side of what we do.

Meanwhile our work to protect the character of Cricket Green continued as usual. We remain heavily involved with The Canons Lottery project along with Mitcham Society and Friends of the Canons. While there was little evidence of any work beginning on the ground during the year we were pleased to see our proposals for a small archaeological dig on the West Lawn of The Canons house come to fruition. The project also participated in Mitcham Heritage Day.

We also did considerable work tackling development pressures. We were faced with numerous significant planning applications for generally overly-large and poorly designed blocks of flats both within and in the immediate environs of the Conservation Area. We are not against development, but will continue to fight for high quality design and appropriate scale, and sadly all too often neither is present in proposals.

Unfortunately the Burn Bullock situation remains unresolved. There was virtually no movement at all on plans for the Grade II listed pub, its car park or the future of Mitcham cricket pavilion. We remain hopeful of a positive outcome, and continue to work closely with Mitcham Cricket Club to seek a positive resolution.

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage could not exist without its volunteers. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who supports us, by being a member, by helping out at events, by taking on any task, large or small. Without our volunteers we would have had no birthday cake, no privet hedge, no Community on the Green, no Mitcham Heritage Day, no feedback on planning applications, no meetings, and none of our work to protect, preserve and enhance our area could happen. It is our members and volunteers who make us what we are. Thank you.

John Strover
Trustee & Chair, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

The new Cricket Green Charter



We published a refreshed Cricket Green Charter as part of our 50th anniversary celebrations. This sets out principles to be used by everyone to guide the future of Cricket Green. We believe that any opportunity to change Cricket Green is a privilege and all proposals should be required to show how they add positively to Cricket Green's story.

The Charter was prepared following wide consultation with local people, including a public workshop supported by local councillors and Merton Council and a door drop to over 4,000 households.

The Charter identifies green spaces and community assets to be protected, local shopping parades and employment sites to be safeguarded, brownfield sites to be developed and streets and public spaces in need of new investment.



Our refreshed Cricket Green Charter

The Charter calls for the highest standards of design with a new design code and an expectation that any development facing one of the greens should be of a quality that could be listed within 30 years.

It calls for Mitcham cricket pavilion to be transferred into community ownership, and is looking for a programme of tree

and hedge planting to reduce air pollution and help tackle the climate emergency.

There is a need for more places to meet and things to see and do, including restoring the historic pubs and providing more cultural events.

We hope everyone with an interest in Cricket Green and its environs will support the Cricket Green Charter. Get it from our website: mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk.

Tony Burton

Trustee and Secretary, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Local natural environment & Friends of the Canons



Two consecutive years could not be further removed from each other. 2018 had a wet spring, followed by an abnormally warm dry summer that put extreme stress on trees. 2019 was a complete reverse. As spring drifted into summer we wondered if we'd ever see rain again. That thought was banished with a vengeance on 11th June when widespread flooding hit Mitcham with two months-worth of rain falling in 24 hours. However this served to top up aquifers and led to the most prodigious growth in young trees in years. Those in the Bellamy Copse pens put on an extra 25% within the year!



A golden privet hedge planted for the 50th anniversary of Cricket Green Conservation Area

Other pressures on trees during the year were manifold. Cars parked on grass verges at Three Kings Piece, compacting tree roots, were partially discouraged by Merton Council extending the railings, but not far enough south to cure the problem. This stretch was further threatened by a plan to dispense with grass in favour of a wider cycle road.

At least the new copse created on Three Kings Piece was successfully completed. Trees were felled without consent in school fields, at the rear of the White Hart and behind Preshaw Crescent. We urged a rethink by The Canons team and National Lottery Heritage Fund officers about removing mature trees for cosmetic effect, although questions to the Council about this were postponed due to the General Election. In light of Merton Council's declaration of a Climate

Emergency, removing trees seems to be counter-productive.

More donated trees were planted at Lower Green West although, as reported last year, idverde chopped some earlier whips during "maintenance", and have yet to replace them. We had success at getting various footpaths cleared of rubbish and overgrowth. Some had been untouched for over a year. Attempts to have prematurely cleared floral displays donated to local schools and groups failed.

The year ended on a high. As part of the 50th anniversary of Cricket Green Conservation Area we planted a new hedge of golden privet on two sides of the cricket boundary – a real community effort.



Merton's favourite tree 2019 in the former Canons nursery

Friends of the Canons had a busy year improving areas such as The Canons walled garden, Cranmer Green where ragwort removal allowed the meadow to be harvested, Lower Green West in preparation for Remembrance Day, and Bellamy Copse where litter problems seemed less.

Sadly The Canons carp pond had become so infested with rooted pennywort that Friends could not clear it this year. The consequence was a vile stench during autumn. At least we cleared the pond margins.

FroC nominated the Pagoda Tree in the ex-nursery at Canons as Merton's Favourite Tree 2019 and it won the accolade. This is an important factor in the fight

to overturn the proposed barracks-like build on the site by Merton Council's development arm Merantun. This battle continues into 2020.

Friends of the Canons meet on the 3rd Sunday of every month for workdays, usually at 10.00am by The Canons house. Check monthly MCGC&H notes for updates, or join the group for free and help safeguard this Mitcham treasure.

John Davis

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

Landscape & townscape

MCGC&H



Vestry Hall on Lower Green West

When Mitcham was a self-contained local authority in its own right, the Vestry Hall on Lower Green West was the focus of local government. The advent of the London Borough of Merton in 1965 heralded the loss of this dignity, with ensuing detriment to the perceived appreciation of the place. In fact, a consultant described Lower Green as being just a "roundabout".

This attitude was reflected by indifferent maintenance of the greenspace – an indifference which MCGC&H has sought to combat. Over the years problems tabled have included failure to remove tree prunings, random application of weed-killer to an extent which threatened the survival of the greens' spectacular swathe of bluebells and a failure to pursue listed status for the Mitcham war memorial – the latter being characterised by the holding of Remembrance-tide services at the wholly irrelevant clock tower in Mitcham town centre.

MCGC&H's successes in reacting to these problems and leading to their resolution include achievement of Grade II listed status for the war memorial within the World War 1 Centenary commemorations which resulted in the transfer of civic Remembrance-tide services to Lower Green West where they continue to take place.

The 2019 civic service and the accompanying schools service on the following day attracted excellent attendances, accompanied by a gratifying number of wreaths which were secured by cord to prevent wind disturbance.

The venue received welcome action by Friends of the Canons volunteers who removed the basal growth around trees in order to facilitate the movement of pedestrians for the services, enabling youth groups and school classes to gather in line on parade.

The recent recognition of the value of trees and hedgerows in absorbing atmospheric pollution further justified our programme of adding a 'golden' hedgerow (for the Conservation Area's Golden Jubilee), along the Cricket Ground marginal fence, thereby extending boundary vegetation to supplement the mature native hawthorn hedgerow and Norway Maple trees of Jubilee Corner, which had been planted as a landscaped setting for the 1962 memorial stone installed to celebrate the life of Tom Ruff, Mayor of Merton and a cricketer.

The redevelopment of the Cricketers pub site for a block of apartments accompanied by marginal planting with a good survival rate has added to the area's revival.

Sadly the future of Mitcham's spectacular Grade II listed coaching inns the White Hart and the Burn Bullock remained unresolved during the year to the detriment of the Conservation Area and the buildings concerned.

Thanks to pressure from MCGC&H, Merton-in-Bloom was held, reversing a short-sighted LBM policy to ignore the benefits.

Joyce Bellamy
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Planning, policy & projects



The 50th anniversary year of the Conservation Area also proved to be one of the most challenging in terms of development pressures. The year ended with the area facing unprecedented plans for over 1,000 new flats in eight separate planning applications and others in the pipeline.

These include plans to develop Metropolitan Open Land at Imperial Fields and perhaps most worrying of all two developments by Merton Council itself which would damage The Canons grounds and send entirely the wrong signal about the kind of development which is acceptable in Mitcham's village centre. The designs are universally poor and if permitted they would change the character of Mitcham forever.



The year ended with the area facing unprecedented plans for over 1,000 new flats in eight separate planning applications

Ignoring local feedback we also saw SUEZ bring forward a massive increase in its plans for Benedict Wharf to develop 850 homes reaching up to 10 storeys.

We worked hard to put forward alternatives, including through representations on the Local Plan and preparing the Cricket Green Charter. These both show how to provide well-designed homes, protect jobs, shops and green space and improve the range of community facilities.

We responded to Merton’s declaration of a climate emergency and proposed Mitcham Police Station and Kellaway House be added to the Local List. Our support for the tram to be extended to Sutton from Colliers Wood via Hallowfield Way and Church Road was also influential. We helped in the rejection of damaging development behind the White Hart, poor quality conversion and extension of the old fire station for flats and a major block of flats on the former Sparrowhawk Yard.

As well as tackling large developments we involved ourselves in the detailed care of the Conservation Area, encouraging Merton Council to use the correct yellow lines on Cricket Green’s roads and take action against the proliferation of unauthorised estate agent boards. We succeeded in changing Mitcham Garden Village’s initial plans for entrance gates, and the result is a design more appropriate to the setting.

We also pressed for Bishopsford Bridge repairs to respect its heritage and that of the neighbouring Ravensbury Park wall. We called out Merton Council on the poor quality of its community engagement and failure to ask for details of the heritage impact of some development proposals in the Conservation Area when it is already an official requirement.

We published a review of the lack of enforcement action in the area during the last five years which prompted some positive action. We also reported on the responsiveness of our ward councillors and asked questions of all the candidates who stood in the General Election.

We were encouraged the Local Government Boundary Commission agreed with our suggestion to align the Cricket Green ward boundary with the Conservation Area near to Three Kings Pond.

Less positive was Merton Council's continuing refusal to implement its own promise to register new green space next to Fair Green as Town Green – we were told this was now a "non-priority priority action." Merton Council also disposed of Worsfold House to Clarion without consultation and without guarantees over the future development of the site.

There is disappointingly little to report on three of the most significant issues in the area. The future of the Burn Bullock and cricket pavilion remains as uncertain as ever and there was next to no progress on either the future of the Wilson hospital or visible delivery of the major Lottery-funded investment in The Canons.

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

Communications & events



*Mitcham Heritage Day at
Mary Tate Cottages*

The highlight of our events year was once again Mitcham Heritage Day. This event grows each year, and in 2019 we welcomed new participants Mitcham Golf Club, Melanie's Walks and Mary Tate Cottages, each offering their own special take on the heritage theme. Mary Tate Cottages held a popular tea party, widely enjoyed, while the golf club put on displays of traditional golfing equipment, clothing and the history of the club.

In addition to the 50th anniversary of Mitcham Cricket Green Conservation Area we celebrated other notable anniversaries on Mitcham Heritage Day including 200 years since the foundation of the current Mitcham Parish Church, and 190 years of Mary Tate Cottages.

On 18th July we held our annual Community on the Green event on the very day that the Conservation Area was enacted 50 years ago – and of course we celebrated with a birthday cake. We also attended Merton Heritage Service's Heritage Discovery Day at the Civic Centre in May, and Mitcham Carnival in June.

Members receive information regularly via email, and throughout the year we use our web site and Twitter to reach out more widely and keep people up to date with our work, share good news, promote campaigns and publicise our activities.

Our printed Bulletin continues to reach over 4,000 local homes, delivered by member volunteers, while eleven monthly meetings during the year (every month except December) see our regular meeting venue Mitcham cricket pavilion full to bursting point. The popularity of these meetings is evidence that local people want to be involved in our work, and everyone's input and thoughts are always welcomed.

Sandra Vogel
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Mitcham Cricket Club



Frustrations continued regarding the tenure on the cricket club's pavilion. After a long wait our landlords eventually responded to the Club's request for a price for the freehold of the site. The price quoted was three times the independent valuation of our current footprint. Meanwhile their plans for a hotel, and later for a care home, have not progressed.



A Mitcham Cricket Club team with the pavilion in the background

We are continuing to talk to the Council about how we can progress the situation towards taking ownership of the pavilion and then being able to extend and refurbish the building in a way that not only benefits cricket played by everyone but also enables the whole of the community to make full use of this wonderful asset throughout the year. To this end we continue to work closely with Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage. We are grateful for their ongoing support.

On the field we had some contrasting performances between our senior teams. For much of the season the 1st XI was in contention for promotion. In the end they finished a close third. The 2nd XI had a much more challenging year and

was relegated from the Surrey Championship. After a tricky first few fixtures the 3rd XI put in a solid performance and finished mid-table.

We were overwhelmed by the popularity of our All Stars scheme with more than sixty 5-8 year olds training early on a Sunday morning. We were proud to be one of only five clubs in Surrey to be awarded the maximum 5-stars in parents' surveys. Our junior cricket festival attracted over 50 participants including a record number of girls. And Mitcham again provided players for the Surrey junior cricket representative teams.

The ladies squad – now called the Mitcham Sapphires – welcomed new members. Our first Ladies Festival went ahead as planned and we fielded two Mitcham teams to compete with teams from Sutton and Walton-on-Thames. Two of the Sapphires joined members of senior and junior sides to make up a Mitcham team which in July took on a team from Merton Council to raise money for the Mayor's Charities.

In September we celebrated Mitcham Heritage Day with a match commemorating the centenary of the visit of the Australian Imperial Forces team to Mitcham to play a benefit match for the Mitcham groundsman at the end of their tour of England.

This year some of our volunteers secured wider recognition, including our junior coaches David Bell and Adrian Gault who secured the Gold and Silver Awards for Sports Volunteering at the Merton Volunteering Awards, and our club secretary and ladies captain Julia Gault who secured the Heartbeat of the Club Award at the Surrey CCC's OSCAs (Outstanding Service to Cricket Awards). Next year we have secured a grant to set up a new Young Volunteers scheme which we hope will attract some new young people to become involved behind the scenes in running the Club. We are continuously looking for new volunteers and anyone who would like to be involved would be most welcome.

David Bell
MCGC&H Liaison, Mitcham Cricket Club

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 31.12.19 £	Year ended 31.12.18 £
INCOME		
Memberships – New	120	70
Subscriptions – Life	0	200
Subscriptions – Ordinary	610	605
Donations & one-off grants	54	117
Bank deposit interest received gross	27	13
Sales	300	670
Social fund receipts	237	508
Golf tournament & lunch	0	0
Total Income	<u>£1,348</u>	<u>£2,183</u>
LESS: EXPENDITURE		
Sundry expenses + Meetings and secretarial expenses	660	745
Linked organisations subscriptions	145	127
Group Insurance	204	194
Bank charges	0	0
Community-on-the-Green & Mitcham Heritage Day	26	78
Donations	0	0
Total Expenditure	<u>£1,035</u>	<u>£1,144</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS	£313	£1,039
Retained surplus brought forward	£7,513	£6,474
RETAINED SURPLUS C/FWD	<u>£7,826</u>	<u>£7,513</u>
Grants brought forward	£2,973	£3,741
Grants received	£6,848	£500
Less grants expended	£3,259	£1,268
Restricted funds available	<u>£6,562</u>	<u>£2,973</u>
Deposit Account	£6,717	£2,932

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
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Member of

