

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

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

Annual Review 2021



We celebrated beauty, nature and heritage in and around Mitcham Cricket Green
in our daily #CricketGreenImages tweet during lockdown in 2021

More images throughout this Annual Review



Restrictions related to Covid-19 meant that 2021 started with us still unable to gather together indoors to have our usual monthly open meetings. However we took the opportunity that good weather afforded us at the end of July to hold our Community On The Green event, and at the end of August to have an evening picnic on the cricket ground. It was lovely to see so many familiar faces join us for these. Some of us had not seen each other for many, many months.

In September we were at last able to restart to open meetings, and we also took the opportunity to have a long overdue Annual General Meeting. From then on we were thankfully able to continue our monthly meeting schedule to the end of the year.

Despite not being able to meet formally for much of the year, our work continued. To highlight just two examples, we were heavily involved in commenting on Merton's new Local Plan – and this work will continue into 2022 and until the Local Plan is finally adopted, and we engaged in consultation on the new Borough Character Study.

On a much more day to day basis we continued our "Cricket Green Images" project on social media. We know from the positive feedback received how much people enjoyed this sharing of images looking at our area from new, different and interesting perspectives.

Our Cricket Green Update which we had started in April 2020 as a way of keeping in touch with people during lockdown, continued to deliver information and news to hundreds of people interested in our work. Thanks to everyone for their positive comments about this, which we have now made a permanent fixture.

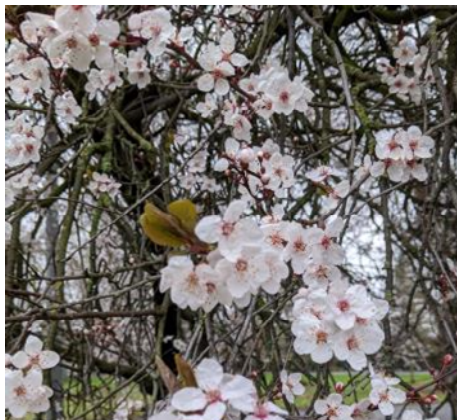
We were able to hold Mitcham Heritage Day on 11 September, and it was a delight to see so many of our partner organisations provide events and activities, and so many people enjoying the day.

You can read much more about our activities during 2021 in the remainder of this Annual Review.

2021 was a year of challenges for many of us, and I would like to personally thank everyone who has taken the time to support us, by continuing membership or joining for the first time, by supporting our events, coming to our open meetings once they restarted, or in any other way showing support.

John Stover
Chair, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Trees, nature & Friends of the Canons



Lockdown and constant changes in Covid regulations played havoc with schedules for the second year running. However, unlike 2020 when mowing grass seemed to be off agenda with noticeable benefits to our environment, 2021 was back to routine cutting, whatever the weather. This inevitably led to greater areas of moss, and bare areas appearing where damp cut clods were compressed by the tractor wheels.

In general, our trees fared well. Young specimens put on plenty of growth, and, most pleasingly, horse chestnuts, usually plagued by leaf-miners causing unsightly premature browning of leaves, completed a full cycle, only shedding its leaves in normal deciduous fashion during autumn. All-in-all there was a spectacular autumn display of colour this year which lifted the spirits after the pandemic ravages.

We grew increasingly frustrated at some of the practices surrounding trees and our local environment in 2021, so tabled a number of Questions to Council on environment issues including fly-tipping, Tree Protection Orders in Conservation Areas, greater clarity and standardisation of planning applications involving trees, illegal tree felling with poor enforcement, and a lack of a Borough Tree Strategy. Few of these yielded answers that suggested changes in policy, especially to protect trees, but it served to heighten the profile.

There was further success at the London in Bloom competition. For Cricket Green, Age UK's splendid show was again at forefront, Jubilee Corner's alpine trough and its seasonal planted beds flourished, plus the thriving privet hedge

and summer planting in the Canons led to us winning another special commendation for our Conservation Area.



Friends of the Canons (FroC)

FroC workdays were inevitably hit both directly and indirectly by Covid-19, but not as badly as 2020.

Bellamy Copse in the Canons had been overtaken by invasives, especially bramble. We were able to remove some of the major runners from the edges of all the pens, and stop overhanging branches snagging passers-by. This led to a number of compliments from the public during our session. More ivy was

suppressed from the main Copse allowing the mature trees more light and less burdensome weight in the upper canopy.

The wild-flower meadows were a real success - where they were allowed to flourish without being mown!

Away from the Canons, with tasks there restricted because of the Lottery-funded work on site, we successfully removed ragwort from Cranmer Meadows allowing the annual cut to be used, gave a healthy trim to the golden privet within the cricket boundary, and tidied the lime trees and grounds on Lower Green West ahead of Remembrance Day, which included persuading a young guy from hanging himself!

At the year end we were successful in two bids, 1) for spring bulbs, 2) for whips and saplings. The bulbs arrived in December, quite late in the planting season, and comprised six times the volume expected. So two emergency workdays were called, and we managed to plant over 1300 bulbs in the Canons and at Lower Green West. Amazingly the weather was good for both sessions.

As ever, we thank those volunteers who stuck with us during this tricky year. Without them none of these good works could have been achieved.

John Davis

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



Our entry for the Neighbourhood category of London in Bloom in 2021 was undertaken by escorting the judges on a lightning tour of as much of the Conservation Area and its environs as was possible within the allowable time.

Many thanks to the volunteers who undertook a major conservation task in the shrubs in the built containers at Jubilee Corner alongside our ongoing deadheading and weeding of the Golden Jubilee rose

bed. The borough contractors had pursued modest seasonal bedding in the three circular flower beds. We continue to oversee the conservation of Alpine plants in the Golden Jubilee drinking trough.

On the day of judging, we took the judges to view the main examples of careful coexistence of landscape features with facilities for children's play, for sports and informal recreation, together with the ongoing conservation and renovation of facilities in the grounds of The Canons.

We stressed the importance of continuing to provide for the recreational needs of people of all ages as a means of reinforcing their support for overall landscape and horticultural quality.

In addition to explaining the geological foundations of the green space and the area's relationship with the Wandle Valley Regional Park, we identified the fact that Mitcham's Greens originated as outliers of Mitcham Common, which had been preserved by means of the Metropolitan Commons Supplemental Act for Mitcham Common itself.

Apart from Cricket Green and Lower Green West, the proximity of the former News of the World playing field - now public open space - was demonstrated, together with the miniature woodland - Bellamy Copse - planted by the local authority to screen the intrusion of the leisure centre buildings in the local scenery.

Although some of the public houses which used to provide floral displays have closed down and many of the tiny front gardens of terrace cottages have been given over to the multiplicity of refuse and recycling bins now required by the

local authority, a few still had sufficient room in which to plant flowers, shrubs and miniature hedgerows.

Initiatives by groups within the community were also shown, most notably the frontage garden bed of Age UK and the boundary floral hedge forming the setting for the rustic bus stop shelter developed by the Glebe Court Residents Association.

A more recent addition, the lawn, trees and shrubbery accompanying the residential block of flats on the site of the former Cricketers public house provided an enhancement to our local landscape, noteworthy for the effectiveness of its maintenance. On Cricket Green itself, the golden privet hedge, planted and mulched by local enthusiasts, provided another example of excellent horticultural practice. The frontage garden area of Mary Tate's cottages was also appreciated.

We were delighted to receive an "Outstanding" award for the second year running, accompanied by a note from the judges conveying their appreciation of the thoroughness of our presentation.

In a townscape context, criminal damage in the form of graffiti spread over a wide area of South West London continues to be a problem where surfaces such as the closed blinds of vacant shops or offices occur. Some tags are merely the work of individuals, but others are an attempt by groups to claim control of a district. A solution would be one or more successful prosecutions.

Joyce Bellamy
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Planning, policy & projects



Building pressures threatening the character of Cricket Green continued unabated during 2021. The green light was given to nearly a thousand new flats on Benedict Wharf and Imperial Fields and other damaging new buildings were given the green light behind the White Hart and in an extension to the old fire station.

We set out our stall on how new and well-designed buildings can be accommodated in detailed comments on Merton's Local Plan, and backed development on 14

sites. The Local Plan goes to public inquiry in 2022.

We welcomed rejection of a new intrusive block of flats on the car wash site on London Road and prepared for a major debate over the future of Mitcham Gasworks where builders plan a series of tower blocks taller than anything else in Mitcham. We successfully rewrote how the character of Mitcham Cricket Green is recognised by Merton Council in its Borough Character Study. Public concern about the impact of new building was demonstrated when the target for our crowdfunding appeal on the issue was exceeded

We succeeded in having Merton Council drop outdated plans for a new access road to Willow Lane across Mitcham Common and were able to secure improved designs for the old fire station scheme.

More proposals for 5G telecommunication masts came forward and we successfully argued there were better sites than those suggested next to the parish church and Benedict Primary School.

Over 900 days after its closure a new Mitcham Bridge was opened at the historic crossing of the Wandle. We joined with a wide range of Merton organisations to support alternative plans that avoided felling trees and demolishing the historic wall. Merton Council chose to pursue its inferior proposals. We welcomed a late change to provide separate cycle lanes in both directions and campaigned to retain the historic parish marker from the earlier bridge.

The Canons project passed an important milestone with the bulk of work on its landscape and The Canons house completed. One benefit was the removal of the 500 year old dovecote from the national Heritage at Risk register. We pressed hard for the works to be completed to the standard required and remain active in trying to steer The Canons project towards a successful outcome. Our efforts to have Bellamy Copse recognised for its nature conservation value were recognised in the new Local Plan where it is designated a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation.

A massive fly tip on Willow Lane became a focus of efforts to address the wider problem. The failure of both Merton Council and Mitcham Common Conservators to take decisive action was exposed by our Freedom of Information requests and we are yet to see plans which will bring about a long term solution to the issue. With Merton Council's largest ever survey of public views concluding that "*Green spaces are the most valued aspect of life in Merton*" we have much higher expectations.

We were pleased to put forward six suggestions for additions to Merton's Local List, including Mitcham Police Station, our last wall mounted post box, the wall

to Holborn Workhouse and important industrial buildings in Willow Lane Industrial Estate associated with pioneering engineering and construction.

The coming year will be important for the future of both The Wilson and Birches Close. We pushed hard for progress in delivering the long promised new health centre and helped secure an "options appraisal" that pointed towards the Wilson as the chosen site.

Tony Burton

Trustee and Secretary, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Communications & events

MCGC&H



Given the horrendous situation with Covid-19 in the early part of 2021, there were times when we thought we would not be able to hold any events during the year. Gladly this was not the case, and while open meetings were cancelled for much of 2021, we did manage to hold our Community on the Green event in July, an open air picnic at the end of August, and Mitcham Heritage Day in September, when our in-person monthly meetings also recommenced.

July's Community on the Green was a wonderful opportunity for people to get together on the cricket ground on a summer evening. The turnout was good, so we felt encouraged to run an evening picnic for the end of August. A "bring your own food and seats" system supported people wanting to take care when socialising. We again had a good turnout, and it was lovely to see familiar faces.

We seriously considered not running Mitcham Heritage Day, but in the end went ahead hoping for the best and aware that the event might not happen. Happily the event did take place, and we are very grateful for the support of the organisations who shared our faith that it would all be OK on the day, and who came together to put on a wonderful mix of things to see, do and experience: Mitcham Parish Church, Cricket Green School, Wandle Industrial Museum, Mitcham Cricket Club, Mary Tate's Almshouses, The Canons, Mitcham Methodist Church, Saints Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church and Melanie's Walks.

Back in 2020 we launched a new monthly email circulation – Cricket Green Update. This was designed to keep people in touch with our work during the

lockdowns. We were so pleased with the positive response that we decided to make this a permanent fixture, and so it continued throughout 2021. Cricket Green Update is delivered by hand to members not on email, and is now sent by email to members plus many hundreds of people interested in Cricket Green. We continue to get positive feedback and have again decided to continue Cricket Green Update for 2022.

Taking the year in the round, we feel lucky. We were able to hold our two landmark community celebration events of Community on the Green and Mitcham Heritage Day, and grow our Cricket Green Update.

Sandra Vogel
Trustee, Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage

Mitcham Cricket Club



Despite the ongoing COVID restrictions, we managed a more normal season for 2021 than we had in the previous year – although the weather was somewhat unpredictable.

We returned to our regular three senior Saturday league sides and entered the Surrey Slam T20 competition. There were also a reasonable number of Sunday friendlies too. There was also more cricket for our junior section.

Sunday training was attended by approaching 150 young people over the course of the 2021 summer. There was also return to league cricket for our three junior teams – although a number of these matches were lost to the weather. We also saw the return of the Sapphires – although there was no organised cricket for them in 2021 – but we had a bigger group of ladies training regularly over the course of the season.

The tenure of the pavilion remains unresolved and a continued frustration. We have now had barely no communication from Phoenix Grp Investments Ltd since March 2019. As far as we are aware they are still pursuing their proposal for a care home on the site and are considering options for expanding the size of the site – including the purchase of the house and garden of No 6. We continue to work closely with Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage and with the Mitcham Society in all of this and remain grateful for their support. We are also

in discussion with our MP Siobhain McDonagh who is doing what she can to try and help move the matter forward with the Council.

In addition to action in the junior leagues, we saw the return of our regular junior 6-a-side festival – although we could not complete it on the scheduled day due to torrential rain. The festival was finally completed the following Sunday. Our fundraising opportunities this year have continued to be seriously curtailed. We benefited from a Government COVID grant and MVSC have kindly allowed us to hold over the funding for our Young Volunteers scheme to 2022.

We look forward to working with MCGC&H as cricket continues for a 337th year on the Green. Now restrictions have ended, we expect to be using the pavilion including restarting MCGC&H's meetings from May 2022.

David Bell
MCGC&H Liaison, Mitcham Cricket Club



Beauty and nature and heritage at Mitcham Cricket Green

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

Join us



Become a member of your local civic society. Annual membership is just £10

To pay by electronic funds transfer

Bank: Metrobank Business
Sort Code: 23-05-80
A/C No: 27429955
A/C Name: Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
Reference: The first 6 letters of your surname followed by the first 3 letters of your first name

Please advise us by email if you use this method – to info@mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk and complete this form so we can claim the gift aid on your subscription.

To pay by cheque

Complete and return this form and send it with your payment to Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage, c/o Merton Connected, Vestry Hall, 336-338 London Road, Mitcham CR4 3UD

If there is more than one member per household please provide details for each person or complete separate forms.

Cheques payable to “**Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage**”

Full Name _____

Address _____

Post Code _____

Email address _____

Telephone No _____

I enclose a remittance of £10 (**Cheque** payable to **Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage**) in payment for my subscription as an Annual Member for the current year.

Please treat all donations and subscriptions which I make to your charity as Gift Aid Donations and reclaim the tax on them. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer.

Dated _____

Signed _____

For Official Use Only	
Date received	
Cash or cheque	

Summary of accounts

MCGC&H

	Year ended 31.12.21 £	Year ended 31.12.20 £
INCOME		
Memberships – New	90	70
Subscriptions – Life	0	0
Subscriptions – Ordinary	620	430
Donations & one-off grants	2557	150
Bank deposit interest received gross	1	17
Sales	300	300
Social fund receipts	45	0
Total Income	<u>£3,613</u>	<u>£967</u>
LESS: EXPENDITURE		
Sundry expenses + Meetings and secretarial expenses	397	61
Linked organisations subscriptions	128	90
Group Insurance	204	204
Bank charges	0	0
Community-on-the-Green & Mitcham Heritage Day	0	0
Donations	0	0
Total Expenditure	<u>£729</u>	<u>£355</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS	<u>£2,884</u>	<u>£612</u>
Retained surplus b/fwd	8438	7826
RETAINED SURPLUS c/fwd	<u>£11,322</u>	<u>£8,438</u>
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	<u>£6,735</u>	<u>£6,734</u>
Grants b/fwd	5684	6562
Grants received	200	200
Less Grants expenditure	702	1078
RESTRICTED FUNDS c/fwd	<u>£5,182</u>	<u>£5,684</u>

Mitcham Cricket Green Community & Heritage
 General enquiries: info@mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk
 Web site: www.mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk
 Twitter: [@MitchamCrktGrn](https://twitter.com/MitchamCrktGrn)

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Member of

