



The Woodsider

JULY 2020

www.woodside-park.com



Letter from the Chairman – a personal view

I hope you are all keeping safe and well. This Corvid19 virus has been a bit of a shock to the system. Many of us have been stuck indoors on lockdown. But there have been many examples of really good neighbourliness including collecting shopping and prescriptions and talking to neighbours in the Suburb. This is gratifying to see.

At the time of writing, the lockdown has just been eased and we can now stand one metre apart. Restaurants, pubs and shops are now open but we still can't go the gym or the local pool, which is what I miss most of all.

We go out for walks through Riverside Park and up the trails to Darlands Lake and this is all very well but it doesn't make up for the treadmill and 32 lengths of the pool!

I was quite dismayed at the mistreatment of Riverside Walk displayed by some people. Cyclists are not allowed to cycle in the park. There are very clear signs which state this. Yet people were riding their bikes as if they were in the Tour de France. With the hot spells coinciding with the lockdown, the park was fairly crowded and cycling with all those people and pedestrians around is just plain dangerous. There were a few accidents. When asked to dismount, most cyclists just ignored us and uttered some abuse. Really, these cyclists need to be brought down a peg or two. I see them riding in the Regents Park Outer Circle, sometimes four abreast. The government is thinking of making any accident between a cycle and a car, to be presumed to be the fault of the car.

I sometimes took my stroll through Riverside Park at 6pm. It was absolutely disgusting to see the waste and litter spread across the park, pirouetting and dancing in the breeze. Are people incapable of dealing with their own litter? Admittedly, the litter bins were generally full but this should not provide an excuse to just leave old cans and wrappers scattered across the sumptuous green turf of the park.

There is a small minority of people who have little regard for other people that live in this world. Shame on you.

Our local Councillor, Caroline Stock, still finds herself as Mayor of Barnet and she is well past her one-year stint. Because of coronavirus she is unable to stand down and find a replacement. In addition, she is unable to carry out her charitable fund-raising activities so she is caught between a rock and a hard place. Those who know Caroline, will know that she will survive!

Planning applications have been received by the Council to turn "Homebase" and the bus yard in North Finchley into residential homes. The Millbrook Park Estate continues to be built unabated and some of the really poor architecture is now making its mark. Try driving down Partingdale Lane and seeing the huge blank walls of brickwork. Someone (and it should be the Council - if no-one else) has to get a grip on this poor architecture. Millbrook Park will just end up as a latter day slum. And still they dig up Frith Lane, Lullington Garth and the roundabout at Mill Hill, where the Mill pub used to be, because the infrastructure serving Millbrook Park is insufficient.

But it's not all doom and gloom. We have been blessed with some glorious weather. Woodside Park is looking green, fertile and lush. Flowers are in full bloom giving colour to the gardens and streets. There seem to be rather more birds about this year and my garden has a whole mumuration of starlings. Apparently a group of starlings is called a mumuration. Dollis Brook is clear and free from rubbish. The air seems to be cleaner. Aeroplanes are rather less frequent overhead and the roads are quieter. We are perhaps fortunate to live in area that can enjoy all of these things.

Hopefully, though better times are ahead. Perhaps we can look forward to a warm summer, sensible and less dogmatic politics, mental stimulation and a bright future. Enjoy the summer.

Robert Shuttler



Sussex Ring in a bygone time

Planning Matters

Current planning applications in Woodside Park can now be found on our website www.woodside-park.com.

The Council has still not made a decision about the eighty-six flats proposed at Woodside Park Underground Station (Council ref: 19/4293/FUL) which are contained within two five storey blocks with no parking and very little amenity space. This is a scheme backed by the Mayor and TfL (Transport for London). There have been quite a few changes to the original scheme but the concept of overdevelopment is very much the same as the initial application.

But the issues regarding affordable housing for Londoners as a whole require addressing. Currently, there are 243,000 households in London on Council waiting lists and 58,000 homeless households in temporary accommodation. The capital accounts for two-thirds of homelessness in England. The solution might be that Councils carry out their own housebuilding programmes but they are hamstrung by bureaucracy, inexperience and lack of in-house motivation. The Government has said that it wants to invest in new housing and infrastructure ("build, build, build") which they say is crucial to economic recovery. The obvious way to do this is to fund Councils so they can build the homes that are required in areas which are acceptable to the local people. Sadly, this will never happen whilst Government and Councils struggle in the bureaucratic mire, checks and balances that they, themselves, have evolved. Only Enfield Council seem to have succeeded.

Green Bin Collections

The fortnightly green bin collections are now well under way and seem to be working quite well. Touch wood!! We even get a handy reminder by email the day before the collection is due.

Congestion Charge

Now that the London Mayor has thrown his toys out of the pram and pushed up the London congestion charge to £15, together with extending the hours (07.00 to 22.00 every day including Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays) what do we make of this? He has also increased the ULEZ charges and decreased road capacity which is causing major jams across inner London. We are not encouraged to use the tube because of coronavirus and, in any event, there are far fewer tubes running at the moment. We are however encouraged to walk or cycle. I haven't seen Mayor Khan cycling around town. There are many of us who can't walk long distances or cycle for that matter.

And now he has reduced the times that the "Freedom Pass" operates. It's alright for younger folk - but 25% of people living in London are over 50 years of age and nearly 200,000 people are over 85 years of age. When you are older you should be able to enjoy freedom of movement and the lack of a restrictive routine. You should not be confined and locked down for the remainder of your life. Shame on Mayor Khan for your high handed ageist tactics!

Presumably, this will be the death knell for inner London and presumably the Mayor will eventually extend the congestion zone out to Woodside Park and beyond. The Germans in World War II couldn't destroy the spirit of London but Mayor Khan and his 150 TFL cronies (most of whom earn more than £100,000 per annum with our tax money) are doing precisely that.

Hobbies

Did you take up any hobby whilst the lockdown was happening? Did you start gardening, stamp collecting, doing jigsaws, knitting, DIY, learning a language or a musical instrument, painting, etc. Learning a new hobby has apparently helped people to stay positive, fill their time and create a mental stimulus. Hopefully, we have all stayed safe, well and sane during these difficult times. We hope to see you at the carol singing which this year will be held on Saturday 19th December at 4.30pm Sussex Ring, all being well.



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Edited on behalf of the committee by Robert Shuttler of 5 Saddlescombe Way N12 7LS
Telephone no: 020 8445 4050 email: robert@mdclondon.com