Morden Park and Playing Fields

REPORT ON CONSULTATION EXERCISE
14th October 2009
Our aims

- Recommendations guiding the future use of Morden Park and the Playing Fields
- Involving a wide cross section of the community
- Exploring a range of different issues
The consultation

• Find out people’s attitudes to the park
• Seek more detailed views to help formulate recommendations
• Feed back on recommendations and reach consensus
What we did...

- Questionnaire
- Four workshops
- Meetings with individuals / groups
- Art Competition
What we did...

- Holiday Clubs
- Local schools
- Bank Holiday event
- Baitul Futuh Mosque event
The recommendations

- The bit you’ve been waiting for...!
- 28 recommendations, across 8 different areas
  - Sport and recreation
  - Nature, landscaping, and wildlife
  - Access and security
  - Events
  - Play
  - Young People
  - History and heritage
  - Delivering the vision
Sport and recreation

- Sports and recreational facilities are needed in the park and should be located in the Playing Fields area
- Commercial development is not welcomed, even if it is the only means of providing organised and managed facilities
- Football, tennis, and cricket should be the priorities for sports provision, while also acknowledging that people would like as wide a range as possible
- Should funds become available, the refurbishment or reconstruction of Morden Park Pools in its current location would be supported
- The 2012 Olympics should provide the context for driving forward the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, which involves use of the park
Nature, Landscaping & Wildlife

- The maintenance of Morden Park’s landscape is a big priority. While it is acknowledged that the Playing Fields would be the most appropriate location for sports, this should not be done to the overall detriment of nature and wildlife in the park.
- A well managed and maintained pond, more trees and flowers would be welcomed.
Access and Security

• Entrances should be clearly marked and where artificial entrances have been created over time, these should either be formalised or closed up
• Depending on the availability of funding, routes for disabled people should be improved with more hard standing surfaces
• Employ a warden or park ranger to help improve security. It is clear that residents feel that they would benefit immeasurably from such a presence
Events

- The bandstand should be utilised more, particularly for music and theatre events and local groups should be given priority in using this facility
- Profits from park events should be put towards upkeep and maintenance and could provide a vital stream of income
- Ticket prices should be affordable for the local community and noise levels carefully monitored to ensure minimum impact on the surrounding residential areas
Play

- More conventional and traditional play facilities for young children were the preferred option and provided in areas, which are secure and fenced off from dogs.
- The provision of facilities for older children such as a skateboard park or BMX circuit should be explored.
- If natural play facilities are to be incorporated they should make as little visual impact as possible on the park’s landscape.
Young People

- Facilities should be provided for all age ranges, with younger children particularly interested in traditional play facilities such as slides, swings and also natural play options.
- Older children prefer facilities such as skateboard parks, sports pitches such as football, basketball, cricket, tennis and volleyball. Properly maintained and managed facilities and recreation activities are seen as a key asset for the 13-17 age group.
- The park should have more events catering specifically to the youth market and - in particular - make more use of the bandstand in this respect.
- Within a framework that encourages youth recreation, areas of the park for more relaxing endeavours such as picnics, sitting, walking the dog, are also a high priority for young and old alike.
History and heritage

- The park could provide a source of information on its history and heritage - this could be achieved by displaying information boards in prominent locations around the park (especially entrances), or by utilising Morden Park House as a centre for local history.
- Building on the point above, more could be done to promote Morden Park House as a focal point in the park, perhaps opening up the gardens to the public or providing occasional events for the local community that did not impact upon its commercial viability.
- Involve local schools and after-school programmes in activities that specifically relate to the history and heritage of the park. These could be combined with programmes involving nature.
Delivering the vision

• Of crucial importance - no capital or ongoing revenue subsidy available from the Council
• No clear consensus, but a number of things that deserve further exploration:
  • Community Trust
  • A levy on Council Tax payers
  • Maximising revenue opportunities in the park (however, bearing in mind lack of appetite for commercial development)
  • Volunteer forces
Next steps

• Our work is almost complete...
  • Summary document of all the recommendations you’ve heard tonight
  • Full report, with all the feedback received (nearly there...)

• Cabinet 9th November
  • Consider all of the recommendations
  • Determine how to progress the findings
That’s it...