



willowlane
THE PLACE FOR BUSINESS

news

March 2014

Willow BID 2 - Vote Yes - Secure Your Future The countdown begins....

The Ballot and Voting Guide

The voting for the renewal of the BID - Willow BID 2 - will be conducted by postal ballot and is organised and managed by Merton Council's Electoral Services. They issued the ballot papers on Thursday 27 February and the completed ballot papers must be received at Merton's Civic Offices in Morden by 5.00pm on Thursday 27 March. This gives businesses a voting period of 28 days.

Prior to the ballot

Electoral Services have already written to the businesses enquiring whom the ballot paper should be addressed to and requesting confirmation of the address to which it should be sent. If no preference was advised, the voting papers will be sent to the business at the address to which the business rates are issued and anyone authorised within the business can vote.

BID booklet

A BID booklet has been produced that sets out the achievements of the BID to date, the plans for the next five years and the services the businesses would lose if the BID is not continued. The vast majority of businesses will have received a BID booklet prior to the vote, but you will receive one enclosed with the ballot paper.



Ballot Paper and how to vote

The ballot paper will have a direct question: **"Are you in favour of renewing the Business Improvement District arrangements for a further period of 5 years?"** To vote you simply mark an X in the box of your choice, in the 'Yes' or 'No' box.

All the roads on the estate will be listed on the ballot paper, however, this is purely for information. The ballot paper will also state the address of the premises the vote relates to.

There are a few businesses that are liable to pay business rates on more than one set of hereditaments (premises) and, as set out in the regulations, will receive a ballot paper for each such hereditament. In order to maximize their vote each ballot paper must be completed.

The ballot paper must be returned in the envelope enclosed with the ballot paper. Votes can only be counted by returning the ballot paper. Voting intentions by email or letter will not be accepted.

Proxy voting

If the ballot paper is addressed to a named voter, that person must vote. In this instance, if another person signs the ballot paper the vote is invalid. If the named voter is unable to cast the vote, then a proxy form must be completed to enable another person to cast a valid vote. The latest time that a proxy may be appointed is 5pm on Monday 17 March. A proxy appointment form is available from Merton Electoral Services.

Lost ballot papers

If the ballot paper is lost or not received a request can be made to Merton Electoral Services for a replacement ballot paper. The earliest a replacement ballot paper will be issued is Friday 21 March. Once proof of identity has been established, an email from the business will suffice.

Declaration of the result

The result will be announced on Friday 28 March and, for the BID to continue, there has to be a majority on two counts. First, in number of votes cast, the Yes votes have to exceed the No votes. Secondly the aggregate ratable value of the Yes votes must exceed the aggregate ratable value of the No votes. In 2009, both these criteria were met in an approximate 10 to 1 ratio in favour of the Yes vote.



Celebrating a triple success - Friday 14th March



A launch event is being organised for Friday 14 March to celebrate a hatrick of successes. The venue will be Connect House commencing at 11.30 with dignitaries from the Council and Transport for London (TfL) attending.

All businesses are invited to attend the event and indeed encouraged to show our appreciation to those bodies that have helped fund improvements on the estate.

The three achievements are:

- **the opening of the bridge**
- **the installation of the new Wayfinding signage and banners**
- **the already live new website and branding**

Merton Council and TfL were key funders and partners in enabling the completion of these projects.

The bridge entrance was closed over eight years ago and one of the priorities in the first BID proposal was that the BID campaign with the

Council to have it reopened. The bridge required remedial work to damage caused by vehicles ignoring the weight limit that applied. After persistent lobbying by the BID, the Council managed to come up with funding to undertake the repairs. Credit must go to the Council who, in these austere times, managed to find the finance.

The Wayfinding project was match funded by TfL and there was also a notable contribution from the Council. The new signage and banners will facilitate the navigation of the estate and is good news for customers, suppliers, couriers and visitors to Willow Lane. The coloured banners will divide the estate into five different coloured zones and TfL may look to run this approach out to other trading estates.

Our new website and branding was funded by the Council. This offers each business a free web page and personalised map indicating the colour zone that the business is located in.

There is an "Offers" section on the website to promote offers such as

special discounts to employees and other businesses on the estate.

There will also be a facility to promote property available to rent or purchase on the estate benefitting land owners and also businesses who may wish to let out all or parts of their property.

The event will include brief speeches from the Leader of Merton Council, a TfL representative and a business from the estate. The timing is over the lunch period and there will be food and refreshments provided by the Connect Café.

It is an opportunity to meet Councillors and senior personnel from TfL and the Council and network with fellow businesses on the estate. A good turnout by the businesses will bode well for encouraging further funding from these bodies and investment in the estate.

We hope you will join us and look forward to your RSVP by **10th March** to graham@willowlane.org.uk or call to confirm on **020 8274 3323**.

...please join us on Friday 14th March

Venue: Connect House, 21a Willow Lane, Mitcham CR4 4NA
RSVP: graham@willowlane.org.uk | 020 8274 3323

- 11.30 - 11.45 Congregate in Connect House, report to reception
- 11.45 - 12.10 Move to the bridge for the cutting of the ribbon
- 12.15 - 12.50 Food & Networking at Connect House
- 12.50 - 13.15 Speeches
- 13.15 - 14.00 Networking

Contact Us

020 8274 3323
www.willowlane.org.uk

bid@willowlane.org.uk

WILLOW BID LIMITED
Connect House
21A Willow Lane
MITCHAM
Surrey CR4 4NA

10 great reasons to vote **yes** in the ballot for BID 2

The present BID period terminates on 30 June 2014 which can be extended for a further 5 years but requires a fresh mandate from the business community. In 2009, an overwhelming majority voted in favour and we require another majority to continue the BID and the services it provides. Here's our Top Ten for why you should vote YES:

1 Security - retain CCTV

The coverage is not owned by the Council or the Police but is funded, maintained and managed by the businesses on the estate via the BID. The CCTV coverage has been instrumental in reducing crime on the estate as verified by the police.

2 Security - continue close relationship with Police

The BID continues to chair the Cricket Green panel where residential groups and the estate discuss area crime and agree priorities with the police's safer neighbourhood team. In the five years of the BID there has been a reduction in major crime, vandalism and, in certain areas, fly tipping has been eradicated.

3 Security – expand CCTV coverage

To fund expansion of the CCTV system with the purchase and installation of additional cameras and monitoring equipment. These will be deployed in vulnerable areas. The priorities are the Abbey and Capital Estates, Eagle Trading Estate, many of the side roads and the Wates Way area.

4 Security – ensure levels of crime are kept low

Avoid returning to the bad old days on the estate when major crime was far more prevalent, vandalism common and fly tipping rife. In those days, there was no CCTV and there was nobody to develop a close relationship with the police.

5 Attract additional investment

To lobby and apply for additional funding to be invested in the estate. We have already attracted over £80,000 which was invested in CCTV cameras, signage and banners under the Wayfinding project, developed a new website and branding. Many investors prefer to work with a body representing businesses and have a preference for match funding.

6 Retain lobbying role

The BID company can lobby the authorities to serve the businesses' interests. The opening of the bridge is a good example where the BID managed to persuade the Council to invest in remedial work. This saves the businesses time and resources.



7 Collective purchasing power cutting costs

The BID can employ collective purchasing power to reduce costs. We have managed to obtain a heavily discounted trade waste recycling tariff that will be circulated shortly. In the new BID period, we will be seeking to expand this into other areas such as reduced costs for mandatory training that businesses are required to undertake, such as first aid training.

8 Retain and develop promotional opportunities

To maintain the website and the promotional opportunities – a webpage for each business's goods and services and a facility to promote special offers to the estate businesses. The site will also promote property available to rent or purchase. All these services will be provided free by the BID.

9 Communicating to businesses

We keep businesses informed on the latest news and developments on the estate and available business support opportunities. These will be communicated by the Newsletter, website and circulated by email.

10 Maintain Wayfinding signage and banners

To maintain the new Wayfinding signage and banners and look to develop further improvements to facilitate the navigation of the estate.

In summary, businesses' top priority is security and they value the CCTV. The lobbying and representative function have been proven and are to be preserved. Collective purchasing makes sense to reduce costs and the promotional function of the website can develop business.

The feedback from the businesses via one-to-one visits indicates another majority vote. In the 2009 vote, the result was 100 Yes votes with only 7 against. **A strong Yes vote can greatly assist in procuring further investment from outside bodies.**

Merton Business Support Service

Small businesses on the estate have the opportunity to take advantage of the Merton Business Support Service, providing high quality, practical advice and support to help businesses develop and expand. Merton Chamber of Commerce is the lead partner and is working with a consortium of London's leading professional and commercial partners, with financial support from the London Borough of Merton. Contact the Business Helpdesk on **020 8619 0700** or helpdesk@mertonbusinesssupport.co.uk

Seeking finance for your business? Have you been turned away by the Banks?

The Merton Business Loan Fund is for established businesses employing between 2 and 49 employees, particularly those in Mitcham and Morden. Loans of up to £20,000 are available to Merton Business. Call the Helpdesk to find out more.



We are delighted to announce the launch of Merton Best Business Awards, to take place at South

Thames College, Merton Campus, London Road, Morden SM4 5QX. This is a great opportunity to raise the profile of your business. 2013 winners included local business, The Vine Project, who won the Mitcham Business of the Year Award. Join us on Wednesday 26 March at 6pm - Canapés and Prosecco to be served on arrival. Please register your place at www.mertonchamber.co.uk/events or call **020 8944 5501** Or email: caroline.cook@mertonchamber.co.uk

Do you occupy a Council owned premises?

Merton Chamber of Commerce, the Council and the Greater London Authority have joined forces to encourage businesses on the Willow Lane Estate that occupy Council owned businesses to have a review of your energy costs, with the aim of achieving financial savings for the

running of your business. To find out more, please contact Linda King on **07837 303089** or email linda@mertonchamber.co.uk

Take One takes on its 100th Apprentice!

With the support of over 40 local businesses, Merton Chamber of Commerce's Take One campaign has seen 100 Apprentice vacancies identified in just 6 months.



Nathaniel Murray became the 100th Apprentice with a new job at the Chamber of Commerce's

own Generator Business Centre in Mitcham.

If you are an employer interested in taking on an apprentice, National Apprenticeship Week 2014 runs from 3-7 March. Everyone with an interest in Apprenticeships across England is encouraged to get involved. Please contact Linda King on **07837 303089** or email linda@mertonchamber.co.uk

Wandle Valley Mega Clean Up Day

As part of the **BIG Green Fund** Project, a clean up day is being organised for the Wandle Valley. Willow BID supports this project as it will bring improvements to the adjacent Wandle area and the wider environment of the estate. The project has secured funding from the Mayor's office.

When: Sunday 9th March

Times: Please arrive from 10.30am for the briefing at 11am. Then work as long as you wish until 3.30pm.

Where: Meet in the car park on the KNK stadium, Bishopsford Road, Mitcham, SM4 6BF.

What: We shall be working safely in teams to clear the rubbish from Watermeads Nature Reserve, Poulter Park, Bennett's Hole Nature Reserve, KNK Stadium and from the River Wandle itself.

Please bring: Tough boots, waterproof clothing, strong gloves if you have them and your lunch. Refreshments will also be available. We will provide gloves if needed, as well as bags and little pickers, etc.



For further information:

Email: peter@nextfield.co.uk

Web: www.wandlevalleypark.co.uk/Projects/Mayors-Big-Green-Fund