

Questions asked by members of the Southfields Grid Residents Association and answered by Justin Smith and Kiri Brierly(*) for AELTC

v2 04.08.21

Q1. The enlarged car park in the publicly accessible part of Wimbledon Park was not used to its full extent this year. However the cars that were parked there have again done considerable damage to the grass. Where will car parking happen in the future? Is car parking in the publicly accessible part of Wimbledon Park part of the plan ?

A1. In the short term it is the worst case scenario, ie how it is now. We have commissioned a study into relieving this use as the project progresses. We will be working towards becoming a public transport event in future.

Q2. Will AELTC publish the advice received from the police which caused the closure of Church Road ?

A2, Full details relating to this year's experimental traffic order can be found on Merton's website using the following link: <https://www.merton.gov.uk/streets-parking-transport/traffic-management/consultations/restrictions-wimbledon-2021>

Included in this documentation is the Statement of Reasons which outlines why the order is considered necessary to manage traffic flow during tennis event days at the AELTC.*

Q3. When AELTC submit the formal planning application later this month will it be to both Merton and Wandsworth (as was the Scoping report) ?

A3. Yes, the formal planning application will go to both Boroughs.

Q4. Why is reducing the number of practice courts "non negotiable" ?

A4. The proposal provides new grass courts and facilities required for the Qualifying Tournament. It also includes new grass courts to support The Championships (for main draw matches) and to provide practice courts for the main draw. At present, the nature of the grass surface (and the need to protect The Championship courts for the main draw) means there is a short fall of practice courts on the main grounds, with competitors often having to share courts during practice sessions. This is contrast to all other Grand Slam Tournaments and has long been viewed as a shortcoming with our competitors. The provision of additional practice courts will help

address this shortcoming. However, it is stressed that size of the Main Draw for The Championships is not expanding. It is important to stress that the size of the Main Draw is not expanding but importantly we will be able to expand wheelchair tennis draw and the U14 tournament. Outside of the Championships the courts will be used for invitational events and to promote lawn tennis.

Q5. Can the height of the proposed Show Court be reduced by partially sinking the building ? What would be the consequences of doing this ?

A5. A world class design, the Parkland Show Court is cut into the ground to hide accommodation for players and officials and plant room. If the court itself was set further into the ground this would potentially increase impact upon the neighbouring trees and would also mean it would be necessary to provide additional buildings to accommodate the accommodation which would be removed to reduce the height. The proposed height of the show court has been carefully considered and will be similar to the adjacent veteran trees (all to be retained). Furthermore, a detailed landscape visual impact assessment has been undertaken to assess the views and prominence of the new show court. The assessment will be submitted as part of the planning application submission.

Q6. Of the lake walkway, what proportion is proposed to be on land and what proportion is proposed to be on boards over the water ?

A6. Our Proposed General Arrangement plan indicates the route of the boardwalk and lakeside paths. The new lakeside walkway (not including the existing section in Wimbledon Park) will extend approximately 1045 metres around the lake. Of this, about 70% of the route will be a boardwalk with the remaining route will consist of paths on land. Over half of the boardwalk will be over water through reed planting with less than half being located over deeper open water.*

Q7. With the qualifying rounds being played at Wimbledon how long will Wimbledon Fortnight last ?

A7. An additional week making 3 weeks.

Q8. How many spectators are anticipated to attend the qualifying rounds ?

A8. At the Bank of England about 2,000 tickets are available on each of the four days of Qualifying. The site on the golf course is bigger but we are not intending to maximise footfall, or indeed, expecting a huge spike in interest however for the purposes of design parameters we have set a ceiling of 10,000 spectators per day.

Q9. Why is the Memorandum of Understanding between Merton, the Wimbledon Club and AELTC “secret” and not in the public domain ?

A9. This is a memorandum to agree to regularly meet to discuss the future of the park and was initiated with the other landowners with advice from Historic England. It is part of removing the “At Risk “ status.

Q10. How much does AELTC pay Merton every year for use of the public areas of Wimbledon Park ? Why is this figure not in the public domain ?

A10. Like many commercial arrangements they are not published by ourselves as there is no requirement for us to do so.

Q11. Is the development AELTC is proposing Phase One of a longer term plan?

A11. The AELTC Wimbledon Park Project is the entire development envisaged, not a phased plan.

Q12. What plans does AELTC have to encourage visitors not to arrive by car but to use alternative forms of transport?

A12. In undertaking the new development, we are actively looking to reduce car trips to and from The Championships and the future Qualifying Tournament. As part of this, we are actively investigating the removal of all event parking from Wimbledon Park. The planning application and Environmental Impact Assessment has taken a reasonable ‘worst case’ approach to assessing the impact of the development and associated traffic on local roads. In tandem with this, the planning application will also include a Travel Plan and Car Park Management Plan which aim to reduce travel by private car, promote sustainable travel modes and reduce associated parking. If possible, the AELTC would like to achieve a greater mode shift away from the private car at a quicker pace – than that set out in the forthcoming planning application. This will include reducing the capacity or potentially removing the use of the northern part of Wimbledon Park (known historically known as Car Park 10) as soon as practical. We have also included in our plans an alternative location for the Queue in the south of the site on AELTC land should this also be required.

Q13. There is widespread lack of awareness of AELTC’s proposals amongst residents of Wimbledon Park and Southfields, the two areas most directly affected. AELTC acknowledges there has been little publicity thus far. What will AELTC do to raise awareness during the planning application phase?

A13. Covid has impacted on this area heavily. We recognise that relying on residents associations for distribution of

information did not lead to a full awareness of the proposals. However we were able to reach more people than we have been able to before using the virtual consultations and the questionnaires where we have had nearly 900 responses overall. There is nothing like face to face discussions though. The AELTC intends to continue to raise awareness whilst the two planning authorities are consulting via our website, social media and direct engagement such as tours of the site. The virtual consultation rooms have been open since March 2021 and will remain online giving easy access. Copies of the application will be lodged in Wimbledon Library and this has also been offered to Southfields. We will have a hard copy at the AELTC.

Q14. Why does AELTC propose building an 8,000 seat show court on Metropolitan Open land ?

A14. During the design process a number of alternative locations for the new show court were considered, including within the main AELTC Grounds. The site selection process will be explained within our application documentation. In summary, early locations considered included Aorangi and the existing practice courts, and in our southern apex off Somerset Road. Both these locations are close to neighbouring residential properties and extend the north/south linearity of the site – which already gives rise to circulation problems during The Championships (by creating dead-ends and pinch points along the main circulation routes). Locating the show court in the new parkland allows us to centralise the event around the Centre Court and No.1 Court creating more public spaces/areas and new wider circulation routes.

Q15. When will AELTC publish replies to its third consultation ?

A15. These will be made available in August.

Q16. Has AELTC considered directly funding improvements to Wimbledon Park eg renewing existing all-weather tennis courts and building new loos?

A16. Yes, and we have made the offers to carry out or take part in such works. Desilting the lake being one such offer.

Q17. Why are AELTC not using or developing the Roehampton site?

A17. The Roehampton site is owned by the Bank of England and is on a short lease to the AELTC. We have recently been able to extend this to allow more time for us to be able to carry out the AELTC Wimbledon Park Project.

Q18. Why not use a tunnel or a footbridge rather than closing Church Road?

A18. We wish to link both parts of our site as one seamless event centred on Centre Court and to take advantage of the historic route for safe circulation. We have investigated alternative options for crossing Church Road which has included road tunnels, pedestrian tunnels and bridge links. None of these alternative options were considered appropriate due to the likely visual and physical impact on the surrounding area, the disruption caused by a lengthy and complicated construction, the challenges in ensuring ease of access for all our spectators and the short period of time the links would be required. For example, to move guests to the deep level to pass under or high enough to pass over the road, significant ramps would be required and/or many elevators. It is stressed that the road closure would only be for a very short period and there is no intention or need for Church Road to be closed year-round. The planning application will propose a series of improvements to the layout and design of Church Road. However, the temporary closure of Church Road for the duration of The Championships and Qualifying Tournament will be the subject of a separate Traffic Management Order.

Q19. Will the new new linear park be used for camping and the queue rather than using the public park?

A19. It could be used for both these functions but with beneficial loss to Merton.

Q20. Who is in overall operational charge of this project?

A20. The project is under the control of the AELTC Master Plan Committee reporting to the Main Board of the AELTC, in a day to day capacity Justin Smith is managing on behalf of the Board.

Q21. What are the dimensions of the ancillary hubs?

A21. These range in size and each will be detailed in our planning application or will have parameter plans setting out their maximum dimensions.

Q22. Is AELTC in discussions with TfL over enhancing access via the tube?

A22. Yes we have regular liaison with TfL over the entire transport network and future plans. We aim to reduce reliance on cars coming to the area. The site already has good public transport links via underground, overground and bus routes. The District Line upgrade which is currently underway will increase capacity on the underground in coming years and our new entrance arrangements will make the journey time into the park and arrival at The Championships just a short walk from Southfields or Wimbledon Park stations. We are engaged with TfL on future transport options and on active travel measures including cycling.

Q23. Why is AELTC not developing a show court on its current site?

A23. During the design process a number of alternative locations for the new show court were considered, including within the main AELTC Grounds such as in Aorangi or on Somerset Road. The site selection process will be explained in further detail within our application documentation. In summary, early locations considered included Aorangi and the existing practice courts, and in our southern apex off Somerset Road. Both these locations are close to neighbouring residential properties and extend the north/south linearity of the site – which already gives rise to circulation problems during The Championships (by creating dead-ends and pinch points along the main circulation routes). Locating the show court in the new parkland allows us to centralise the event around the Centre Court and No.1 Court creating more public spaces/areas and new wider circulation routes.