

1. Chair's Report (Jan-Dec 2025)

On behalf of the Committee, here is snap-shot of SGCARA activities in 2025 – yet another busy year! We have now had 2 full years with Martin Howe as Treasurer, & William Courage as Examiner, & 1 full year with Freda Sedgwick as membership coordinator. This has made the nuts & bolts of the functioning of SGCARA so much smoother. The icing on the cake is Liz Falcone quietly & efficiently updating records, including the emailing list, so that new members hear from us very quickly. This is in addition to her fantastic & time-consuming work keeping our website up-to-date.

SGCARA is also very grateful to Peter West, a past committee member, for taking the Minutes of this AGM, as he has done on a number of occasions before.

Our core functioning has also been enhanced by the evolution of a Data Privacy Policy in 2025. Not the most inspiring of SGCARA's tasks, but obligatory for all entities like ours, & a helpful focus on how to handle your data responsibly. You will find it on the SGCARA website.

A rather more enjoyable piece of SGCARA admin in 2025 was the adoption of our logo in September. This followed a competition for Saint Cecilia's pupils. We were delighted with the quality of the entries. The pupils were apparently delighted with the 'One4All' gift-card prizes they received, so win-win! These prizes were very generously donated by a local business The Halcyon Centre Ltd

The next major 'event' after this AGM is the (online) Hustings we are running on Thursday 30th April at 8.00pm. Some residents have already sent in their request to receive the Zoom link to 'attend' this event. When we send out the link (towards the end of this week) we will include a list of participating candidates. Just a reminder that, given the format, questions MUST be sent in writing in advance.

Our main communication with members remains the regular News Update emails. Ideally the emails are no more than every 2-3 weeks. To comply with our GDPR responsibilities, recipients have an opt-out opportunity with each email.

SGCARA's printed newsletter 'Reaching out to Residents' is produced 3 times each year. We continue to try & attract advertising to help offset printing costs. This has proved successful in forging positive links with some local businesses & services.

Please email to let us know of traders & contractors you have used who might be interested in advertising with us. It still costs just £40 for a 1/6th page advert.

We are so appreciative of residents who contribute to the distribution of the newsletter to ALL households (about 1000) in our area. Di Allison who has counted, bagged & often folded the newsletters for many years is gradually stepping back from this task. Many thanks to her & also to those who helped with this rather tedious but essential job in March 2026!

If you would like to offer to help in any part of the newsletter distribution, regularly or occasionally, please let me or one of the committee members know, or email SGCARA.

SGCARA News Update email topics & related activities

Our visual & ecological environment – both local & a little farther afield.

Each January we encourage residents to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch – making the most of the large gardens & big open spaces near our Conservation Area. Throughout 2025, we alerted residents to events on nearby Wimbledon Common, practical things like St Michaels 'Refill' scheme, Southfields Harvest & the Big River Watch. Also 'Recycle More Southfields' which facilitates recycling of materials/items not accepted for council-recycling. Our reminders to residents to water young street trees near where they live are even more important with increasing spells of very hot, dry weather, connected to Climate Change.

SGCARA organised the 2 'Rubbish Days Out', tours round the Western Riverside Waste Authority in March & April, to make us more aware of what happens to our waste: Those who attended found them fascinating & very well-presented.

We publicised the Friends of Wimbledon Pk tours of Wimbledon Pk in 2025 & more recently, exploring its rich history & ecology. No doubt a very different tour to those offered by AELTC.

In September, SGCARA once again offered a small contribution to our local environment by our street tree-pit planting. This was part of the council's 'Sustainable September' initiative, & we again received a micro-grant. The number of participants, (including enthusiastic children!) was larger than in 2024 & we had learnt lessons, especially that all the planted tree-pits need a notice on them to help keep school children, dogs, council workmen & rubbish bags away!

Having looked very sorry for themselves in the winter, some of the big Sutherland Grove tree-pits burst into life while the spring bulbs were in full bloom. The planted tree-pits on the surrounding roads, which get less foot-traffic, are looking great. It is clear some participants have added extra plants themselves since September, which is lovely. We hope to apply for another micro-grant next September to increase the number of residents taking part yet again & the number of street tree-pits planted. Opportunities like this will presumably depend on the 7th May election-results

'Cultural' Events & Activities

Another function of SGCARA's News Updates & actions is informing about local cultural events & activities, especially those involving local residents, but also those promoted by other entities & the council, (now at the end of their year as London Borough of Culture). Since April 2025 we have been emailing out the Southfields Library monthly activity leaflets. These are bursting with opportunities for all ages. The library itself doesn't send these by email, so we think SGCARA emails may be the only way you can access news of the activities electronically.

The most recent SGCARA events for residents, older & younger, were the Quiz Night at the Park Tavern in Nov & Blue January Family Fun in Jan 2026. This was brilliantly master-minded by Susie Dye with great help from others who we believe were mainly Sutherland Grove residents. Thankyou Susie! Thinking of Sutherland Grove, the latest 'ROTR' included the suggestion of a celebration of some Sutherland Grove houses being 100 years old in 2026. The item made clear that this can only happen if some Sutherland Grove residents step forward to help organise it.

Current Crime-Risks

Our News Updates unfortunately also have to alert residents to current crime-risks. These have included well-planned thefts from garden sheds, of items left temporarily in front gardens, & cars broken into. The installation of 'sleeping policemen' in front of cars in the drive appears to be an effective deterrent against cars themselves being stolen.

We received reports during 2025 suggesting some drug dealing in our area. We warned residents to be on the watch for cars parked in the quieter areas of our streets late at night, the drivers approached by various people at different times. If you notice this type of scenario, please try to note the car Reg number without drawing attention to yourself, & immediately tell our local police.

We have also publicised the chance for residents to sign up to the Met Engage scheme & we share details of the West Hill SNT Police Panel meetings, where you can speak with our local police.

'Rat-Run' traffic problems

Real progress as regards solution of our 'rat-run' traffic-problems appears paralysed.

The finalised Report & Data from the March 2025 Traffic Survey is still outstanding. The council's excuse is that they are waiting for TFL to make a decision on whether or not to ban Right Turns into Sutherland Grove for eastbound traffic coming down West Hill.

The recent School Streets proposal for Sutherland Grove is an added complication. The council let slip that they thought the proposed restrictions might help solve our '*through-traffic*' problems. Local residents in the main feel the opposite is true.

At the 'School Street' drop-in on the 24th March, it was notable that fully-finalised Data was presented from the traffic survey carried out in December 2025 – just 3 months previously. Yet no finalised data is available for the March 2025 survey.

As you know, SGCARA initiated a petition against the Sutherland Grove School Street proposal. It is still open for (local) signatures. Up to this morning 328 had signed. If you haven't seen it, do take a look, read the 5 Key Concerns we have about the proposal, & sign if you agree. Find it here:

<https://www.change.org/SchoolStreetPetition>

All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC) - Wimbledon Park – ongoing

These huge AELTC proposals have now been running for 5 years, & the legal ramifications get ever more complicated. The future of over 50 open spaces within Greater London & many more country-wide remains at stake. This is not a 'NIMBY' issue – unless you make that **Nature In My Back Yard**. The whole issue is very relevant to us here. 8 years of construction traffic for starters, much of it apparently destined to pass along Wimbledon Pk Rd.

The deliberations are now in the territory of the Protection – or loss of Protection – of ALL public land, including if & when sold by a local authority. Describing recent political moves in detail would take ages & be totally tedious. Suffice it to say that if a recent Amendment to the English Devolution Bill Approved in the House of Lords is also Approved in the House of Commons TODAY, it gives the Secretary of State of the day the ultimate right to release obligations of Public Trust. should we explain this relates to green space being kept for public benefit rather than available for building on etc? The Govt's Housing Minister in the House of Lords did a sudden about-face over this matter. At one moment she was totally against it. The next, she became a co-sponsor of the 'offending' Amendment. This has Lobbying – with a very large CAPITAL 'L' – written all over it. This is precisely the reason why Protection of public land for public benefit should be safeguarded beyond political influence.

Read all details on the Save Wimbledon Park website.

Planning within SGCA

It is part of SGCARA's constitutional remit to input comments on planning applications where it is felt that proposals have an effect – positive or negative - on the character of our Conservation Area. We don't respond to all Applications by any means. It has become clear that a number of residents are unaware of the 2023 updated SGCA Appraisal & Management Strategy undertaken by Wandsworth Borough Council. Access it here: <https://share.google/mfmOASQegyKG4MoxK>

We find it frustrating that the council seems to do virtually nothing to make planning applicants aware of this document. We now realise it appears to be left to SGCARA to do this. We are currently close to finalising a document of guidance for those contemplating changes to their houses, & also for ourselves when assessing applications. This will be on the website as soon as completed.

Finally, thanks as always to Saint Cecilia's School for continuing to allow us to have our main meetings in this beautifully-redecorated Refectory. Similarly thanks to Business Development Manager Dave Cobb & Premises Manager Andy Barrett for their ongoing & cheerful support.

Lastly, a thank you to the current SGCARA Committee members for their work to help keep our Conservation Area as lovely an environment to live in as possible & thanks to the many residents who also support & help in this ideal.

(Julia Raeburn Chair SGCARA 20.04.26)