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BID4 Proposal
2024 - 2029

Foreword from the Chair

Willow BID has achieved a lot of goodwill so much since its inception in 2009 and in that time, we have come a long way.

Whilst the estate is in need of a major clean-up and this task is challenging, I do believe it is achievable.

This can only be undertaken by the BID working closely with the council and police, this important work is underway with our new Estate Coordinator. Prior to the new appointment, I accept that there was a gap in a concerted delivery resource which led to a noticeable decline of the estate. The issues you have reported to us are being addressed by the Estate coordinator. However, there is much more work required and things can only improve if the BID is voted in for another term.

There remains continued public sector cuts and economic uncertainty, this is why I hope you agree that businesses need the BID in these challenging times. The BID will continue to pull together with our fellow businesses and partners, however, we need to secure the continued investment the estate needs to remain competitive and help our businesses thrive.

The BID is working on an agreed parking strategy, covering enforcement, removal of abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping and the constant littering in order for customers and clients to access and exit the estate. The BID will continually be liaising with the police at the Safer Neighbourhood Meetings and the Council's monthly meetings to determine how the CCTV is best managed.

There is a long list but it's important we pull together, remain strong and be honest with the tasks needed.



I urge you to Vote Yes for the continuation of the Willow BID. On behalf of the Board, I commit to delivering the projects and services outlined in this business plan to the best of our abilities. Without the BID, none of these projects or services will be delivered.

Jim Trotter Chair, Willow BID

Summary

In May/June 2024, businesses in the Willow Lane Trading Estate will be asked to VOTE to renew the Willow Lane Business Improvement District (BID).

We plan to build on the work undertaken by the Estate Coordinator in the last year and to achieve much more with your support for the BID.

- The BID has increased reporting of fly-tipping / dumping and removal of abandoned vehicles
- It has been agreed that monthly monitoring meetings will be held between the local authority and the BID.
- The BID has agreed meetings with the police to maintain Safer Neighbourhood Meetings and agree a Service Level Agreement
- The BID has agreed a phased approach with Traffic Consultation to agree parking strategy
- The BID has agreed a way forward by sharing CCTV access with police and local authority
- The BID has increased the reporting of estate maintenance
- The BID will have regular meetings with planning and businesses
- The BID will help support planning of improvements to the Nature Reserve / Poulter Park / Bennet's Hole

Support the BID to stay connected

There are challenging times ahead.

At the end of the year the BID and local authority will review the cleaning on the estate.

The large development due to take place near Goats Road will impact how businesses operate. The Estate coordinator is well placed to communicate any information received between the local authority and businesses relating to this development.

This may seem an ambitious document but if we have the right positive ingredients everything is achievable.

We are due our next meeting with the police in May at the Safer Neighbourhood Meeting and they are keen to work with us whilst we develop a service level agreement. It is vitally important we maintain this connection and relationship with the police who contact me regularly now to share our CCTV with them.

Anthony Gopaul
Estate Coordinator



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Let's keep Willow Lane
The place for business

Meet the Board and Supporters

Jim Trotter,
Chair of Willow BID (Director)

Ian Siddle,
Arnold & Self (Director)

Alistair Bigos,
B&D Clays

Daniel Lawes,
Fix Auto Mitcham

Colin Baker,
Forestdale and Colt Staplers

Chris Savory,
Edge Lighting

John Knight,
Brownley Engineering

James Bradley,
Bio Collectors

James Deadman,
Deadman Confidential

Other BID Partner bodies:

Merton Chamber of Commerce

Merton Council

Future Merton and local
Councillor

Police

Safer Neighbourhood Team



“The BID plays a key role in supporting local businesses. Its continuation ensures a strong voice and resources for our community”

James Deadman
Deadman Confidential

What's important to you

To produce this document the BID undertook a series of consultations with businesses on the estate by email or 1-2-1 business engagement meetings or follow ups from our newsletter and business planning meetings held.

There are 184 individual units on the estate. The questionnaire was issued and completed anonymously. 76 questionnaires were completed with the following noted :

- 93% said the CCTV expansion should continue and include installation of additional cameras and reduce the gaps in coverage.
- 90% felt we should explore the possibility of installing screens (via the CCTV system) that would highlight the number plate of each vehicle entering the estate to make the driver aware that they have been recorded entering the estate.
- 98% felt that the Willow BID continues to lobby in the interests of businesses on the estate
- 96% of companies felt the role of the Estate coordinator should continue
- 60% of companies would like to see green travel plans developed
- 53% are interested in a bus service operating on the estate
- 77% would like to see the nature reserve developed

Your Feedback

"The BID needs to work harder with enforcement and business rates have increased a lot"

BID response: The BID aims to increase engagement and put pressure on the local authority

"If all these proposals could be achieved the whole appearance and practical functioning of Willow Lane would be improved. "

BID response: This can only happen with your support and a YES vote for the BID

"There would be a reduction in the number of un-occupied units."

BID response: Improvements to the environment encourage new business and the estate benefits

"Improved CCTV coverage will discourage a lot of anti social activity on the trading estate."

BID response: The BID is discussing the regular maintenance of the CCTV cameras with the provider and increasing coverage of the estate

"People pay attention to fines"

BID response: Our engagement with the local authority will help to develop regular patrols by the enforcement team

"Finding your way on the estate can be a confusing task, especially if you are not from the area or familiar with the layout. Improved signage would be a welcomed addition"

BID response: This is an aim of the BID and discussed in this document

Introduction

Willow BID's current term will end on 30th June 2024. The BID must continue by a vote of local businesses to ensure the estate is revitalized. The make-up of the estate has changed especially over the last five years. Businesses will be sent a transport consultation by the local authority to help put in place an agreed 'Parking Strategy' where the estate will be cleaned up in phases.

Vote yes by 27 June 2024 to continue the BID.
Let's stay connected

- A dedicated Estate Coordinator (2/3 days/week)
- Business Board
- Invest in a Ranger to undertake an enforcement role (this is a new post created as businesses want to see enforcement.)
- Extensive CCTV cameras and monitoring
- Police (agreed regular meetings)
- Cleaning Team
- Monthly meetings with Council to report and action items
- Faster broadband (scheme on estate promoting Glide)
- Business website
- Lobbying and networking
- Parking strategy and implementation
- Estate signage
- Wayfinding
- Air quality monitoring
- Reporting of dumping, fly tipping and littering
- Investigate / support other projects – develop Nature Reserve / Poulter Park / Bennets Hole, Merton Chamber and bus route through estate

In 2009, Willow Trading Estate businesses voted to become one of the first industrial Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) in the UK.

Our strength lies in the goodwill emphasized by our active businesses and other partners, who support the Board in driving continuous improvements and positive change on the estate.

We are now inviting businesses to **VOTE YES** to continue the BID for a fourth term and to reboot our relationship with the local authority and police. Voting No will bring chaos as there will be nothing in place to help liaise with the local authority and police.

We have achieved so much in the past decade. We have a strong lobbying voice with the Council and other partners. However, there is much more to do and, without your support, all the BID's services will stop and the improvements will be lost.

We have heard from many of you about your priorities for the area over the next five years and have incorporated these in our proposals. We hope now to convert your enthusiasm and support into a further five years of investment for Willow Trading Estate.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you want to discuss any aspect of our proposals in more detail.

Thank you for your support.

“Since Anthony joined the BID, there’s been a noticeable improvement on the estate for everyone who works here. The cleaning undertaken by the Council is checked with the estate coordinator. While there’s still a long road, there’s no doubt things are moving in the right direction.”

John Knight
Brownley Engineering

THEME 1

Improving Public Realm

ENFORCEMENT

Recent meetings on the estate, involving the estate coordinator and businesses, revealed a critical issue: a lack of enforcement. While the planned re-installation of yellow lines on Wandle Way following the traffic consultation is a positive step, it will be rendered ineffective without consistent enforcement. This is especially concerning as the previously existing yellow lines on Wandle Way have faded, creating a chaotic parking situation reminiscent of the wild west. Furthermore, the presence of abandoned vehicles on the estate adds to the problem.

What the BID will do:

Investigate the feasibility of a ‘Ranger’ authorized to issue fines for violations related to:

- Automatically issue fines to vehicles parking illegally on the yellow lines
- Use of the CCTV to capture those who place large containers illegally on the road
- Use CCTV to catch those who illegally dump waste (fly-tipping)
- Issue fines for those who litter
- Work with police to report illegal use of drugs on the estate
- Investigate the location of more bins on the estate



- Decision to be shared amongst bid levy payers and the local authority

Monthly Meetings with the Council

- Overall status of estate - fly-tipping, dumping, abandoned vehicles - the position with the BID and local authority will be reviewed and agreed
- The BID reports progress made against SLA targets to the authority.
- It is envisaged that the Estate Coordinator and Programme Manager for Business & Economy attend these meetings
- Businesses on the estate are informed about any developments that will impact them.
- Cleaning by the local authority is reviewed annually with the BID Board and is in line with the Council's adopted documents.

Clean Team

What the BID will do:

- In collaboration with the local authority, the BID will establish a consistent cleaning regime for the entire estate. This ensures that any instances of missed cleaning can be reported and addressed promptly through a predetermined course of action.
- The BID will collaborate with the local authority to prune trees and sweep away dead branches.
- The BID will report any incidents of dumping, fly-tipping, and littering to the local authority within an agreed time frame.
- The BID will report abandoned vehicles, large containers, or any unidentified items to the local authority. An agreed-upon time frame will be established for their removal.
- The LBM's cleaning regime is set out in a service level agreement. This is not a negotiated proforma. A draft version is attached. This is the benchmark for Merton the borough. The Board will finalise any formal SLA shortly after ballot.

THEME 2

Improving Linkages with the Community

This comprises of supporting the development around the Nature Reserve / Poulter Park / Bennet's Hole. Although, outside the BID area, it is frequented by nearby businesses and staff and is an area of natural beauty.

What the BID will do:

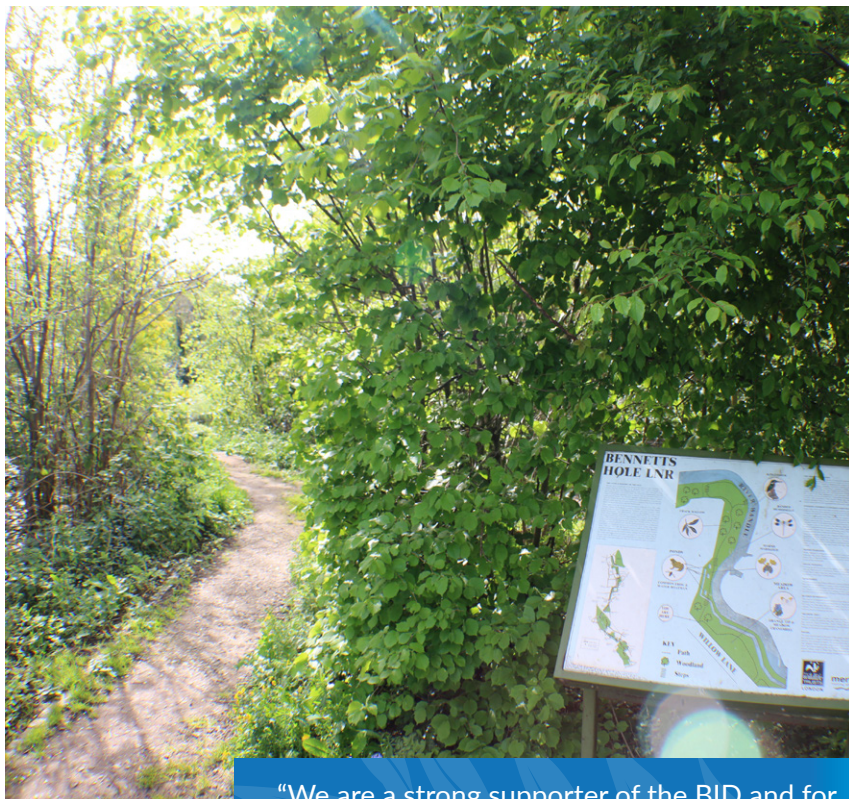
Attract funding to the nature reserve and surrounding area but working with LB Merton and other partner bodies

The priorities are:

- Developing Wandle Trail
- Police to include this area in their regular patrols
- All litter and any fly tipping to be cleared
- Woodchip to be put down on any muddy areas of the path
- Fly tipping behind the houses in Riverside Drive and Brookfields Ave to be removed
- More benches to be provided
- Maintenance of the river
- Secure funding to the area
- The alleyway leading to the tram is plagued by anti-social behaviour and litter at night. Improved lighting would significantly enhance the area's safety and aesthetics.



This commitment may require seeking out some funding or allocating funding. The BID will help co-ordinated support with local stakeholders in any application or other grant regimes. It is important to know that Poulter Park is adjacent to but not within the BID boundary.



“We are a strong supporter of the BID and for improvements around the Nature Reserve.”

James Bradley
Bio Collectors

THEME 3

Safe and Secure

The BID leverages CCTV as a key tool to enhance the security of the area, promoting a safer environment for businesses and visitors.

- Maintenance of 33 existing CCTV cameras
- Provision of 2 ANPR (automatic number plate recognition) cameras
- Share footage with police
- Share footage with local authority
- Expand CCTV operation to cover any gaps
- Agreed mechanism in place to share CCTV with larger businesses CCTV teams
- Investigate tendering CCTV system to a third party to cover operations



Working with the police

What the BID will do:

It is important that the BID work with the police in the following areas:

- Agree the current baseline position on the estate and draw up an agreed Service Level Agreement

- Joint problem solving around long term entrenched Anti-Social Behaviour & Road Traffic Offences. Identify hot spot areas and eliminate these from the estate.
- The BID is establishing a Single Point of Contact to enhance communication with businesses. This will address a key concern - the perception of the estate as a dumping ground for abandoned vehicles - which the majority of businesses want to change.
- Strengthening stakeholder confidence in both the BID and the Police can be achieved through regular, jointly-hosted Safer Neighbourhood meetings.



“We look forward to strengthening our relationship with businesses on the estate via the Safer Neighbourhood Meetings.”

PC Jameel
Metropolitan Police

- Regular joint patrols and expanded visibility activities work together to ensure problems are identified and addressed before they escalate.
- Working with the BID to investigate night patrols
- CCTV is shared with the police
- Regular communication of activities and progress made through our informative email and engaging newsletter keeps you informed and involved.

Selected and vetted local business security teams plus the local police will have access to the CCTV system in a cost effective manner.

THEME 4

Transportation

This is an important area and covers the following: Parking strategy; Bus route; Mitcham Junction; Mitcham Tram Stop and links with having Safer Streets.

Parking Strategy

What the BID will do:

The Willow Lane business area is impacted by a number of activities and anti-social behaviour that is taking place on our estate. This includes the dumping of cars and containers for long periods, the use of pavements to park illegally, the installation of illegal signage and the illegal parking on yellow lines.

The council has contacted the BID regarding parking concerns on the Willow Estate. To address these concerns, the BID proposes the development of a Willow Estate Parking Strategy. This strategy will aim to balance the needs of the estate's businesses and residents by maintaining essential services, improving traffic flow, and exploring the feasibility of incorporating visitor parking while ensuring adequate employee parking remains available.

To gather feedback on parking needs and traffic flow concerns, the council will launch an initial email consultation with all businesses on the estate. This comprehensive initiative, if supported, might require a phased implementation due to its scope. During the consultation, the council may inquire about:

“The estate coordinator has kept me continually updated on issues.”

Colin Baker,
Forestdale and Colt Staples

- The Current line markings and associated enforcement, is this sufficient and what more is needed?
- Areas of the Highway that are obstructed by containers and other structures. How do these impact you and your business?
- There have been complaints that there is nowhere to park to visit businesses, could dedicated visitor parking bays be considered and where?

The council will ask for your views and will collate all responses. **The BID intends to work with the local authority and the outcomes will form one of the BID4's commitments in the new term.**



- A feasibility study is needed to determine the viability of a bus route serving the estate, including potential route options and optimal service frequency.
- A comprehensive assessment is needed to determine how Mitcham Junction, the Mitcham Tram Stop and the alleyway leading to the tram stop can best serve the estate, particularly during winter months when reduced daylight hours can create safety concerns for pedestrians.



“The estate coordinator’s efforts are making a positive impact. Fly-tipping has been reduced, and the promotion of Wi-Fi on the estate is a welcome addition. While cleaning remains a priority, collaboration with the local authority is key. I eagerly await the upcoming traffic consultation, as parking is a major concern for businesses here at B & D Clays, like many others on the estate.”

Alastair Bigos
B&D Clays

THEME 5

Promoting Business and Trading Conditions

What the BID will do:

Developing a Willow Lane Offer

Following a comprehensive clean-up of the estate, a collaborative marketing effort will be launched in partnership with the Council. This will involve engaging key stakeholders, including ratepayers, landowners, freeholders, estate agents, and BID supporters, through a series of Zoom meetings. The goal of these meetings is to develop a strategic marketing plan that effectively positions the estate as an attractive destination for investment and relocation. By showcasing the estate's potential, we aim to attract high-calibre companies and skilled employees, ultimately fostering economic growth in the area.

Supporting partner organisations

Such as Merton Chamber and identifying how they can best benefit businesses on the estate.

Wayfinding

To optimize the visitor experience and support business growth, a consultation exercise is needed to develop clear and effective estate signage that aligns with the agreed wayfinding strategy. Improved signage will make it easier for visitors to navigate the area and find businesses, leading to new clients, retaining existing ones, and ultimately contribute to their overall success.

Financials

The Willow BID will raise approximately £175,000 per annum through the mandatory levy charged on businesses to fund its projects and services. These indicative figures are shown in the table on the next page, such figures are based upon an expected collection rate and the current rateable values list. Indicative % are used for the delivery of each of the five themes to account for potential changes in collection rates.

These funds are 100% ring fenced for spending for in the benefit of the area.

Collection of the BID levy carries the same enforcement weight as collection of the non-domestic rates.

The BID levy will have to be paid by a new ratepayer occupying an existing or new rateable property within the BID area up until the end of the five-year term on 30th June 2029.

Under the BID Regulations, Merton Council is responsible for collection of the levy on behalf of Willow Lane and these arrangements are outlined in the draft SLA which also includes baselines of statutory services the Council already provides, distinct from any services provided through the BID.

The levy payable by each ratepayer is defined by a 2.25% rateable value in the year of collection, subject to a maximum(cap) of £1,650 per rateable property. Businesses/premises with a rateable value of below £5,000 are exempt from the BID levy. The BID will review the levy cap annually on a date that works with the Council. The previous cap set before 2019 was £1,204. This in effect means a property with a rateable value in year 1 of more than £73,333.33, will not pay more than £1650. In addition, this system ensures properties below the cap, who do not have a re-evaluation within the 5-year period of the BID will not pay any additional levy. Vat is not charged on any levy.

Cap Review


The BID will be limited in its annual review of the cap to a maximum increase of RPI + 3% in any one year. If the BID wishes to increase the cap further than this during the BID's term an alteration ballot would need to take place. The BID must consider its genuine operational needs, inflation, be reasonable, and justify any increase when reviewing the cap value. The BID will not as a matter of course increase by the maximum allowed, it must not do so without reasonable justification or exceptional circumstances. The figures presented below are not forecast on this maximum limit but based on a flat figure current inflation of 3.5% and roughly 95% collection rate.

BID Financial Policies

The owners of empty properties will be liable for the BID levy with no void period.

The "closed end of year rule" will be applied effective at the end of each financial year (30th June) corresponding to the Valuation Office Agency's alteration date list. No BID levy refunds will be payable for changes in rateable values in previous years once the end of the financial year has passed.

All new property entering the rating list after 1st July 2024 shall have the BID levy applied as per the value on the date of entry and as per the BID levy rules.



"I welcome the work undertaken by the estate coordinator. With CCTV safety and security of businesses is important."

Ian Siddle
Arnold Self Storage
and Treasurer Willow 3 BID

BID Delivery and Running Costs

BID Management costs are split between the project themes according to the estimated resource required for each theme and acknowledging that none of the projects or services can be delivered without a management resource. A proportion of the BID Management time is also apportioned to delivery and running costs. This will cover the time spent on running the BID Company and good governance such as communications, performance monitoring and financial management. As a result of this policy and varying collection rates indicative % figures have been used for allocation of BID resources.

Any reserves at the end of June 2029 will be carried forward into the next term.

Alterations Policy

The BID projects, costs, timescales, and budgets can be altered subject to Committee/Board approval providing the changes fall within the income of the BID and meet BID objectives. This enables the BID to operate flexibly to respond to changing demands of levy payers, the economic landscape, and potential opportunities.

Additional Income

The BID will work pro-actively with statutory partners and other stakeholders to pool resources, secure grant funding, sponsorship, and other income to maximise the impacts that can be delivered across all five project themes throughout the five-year term.

“Since Anthony has been in post I have seen the BID move forward positively”

Chris Savory
Edge Lighting

How will the money be spent?

The budget for Willow BID has been determined by the priorities of the Willow Lane business community. The indicative budget allocation by theme for the five years of the BID is as follows (figures to nearest £)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	All Years
BID levy Income (collection rate at ~95%)	175,000	181,125	187,464	194,026	200,817	938,432
Total Income	175,000	181,125	187,464	194,026	200,817	938,432
Total Expenditure	175,000	181,125	187,464	194,026	200,817	938,432
<i>Theme 1</i> Improving Public Realm	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%	28.6%
<i>Theme 2</i> Improving Linkages with the Community	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%	5.7%
<i>Theme 3</i> Safe and Secure	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
<i>Theme 4</i> Transportation	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%	14.3%
<i>Theme 5</i> Promoting Business & Trading Conditions	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%
Overheads	50,000	51,750	53,561	55,436	57,376	268,123
Contingency	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	50,000

The figures in the above table are based on the rateable values given to the BID by the Council as of March 2024. Businesses and premises are subject to a revaluation by the Valuation Office which over the term of the Bid will likely vary collection amounts. Rateable valuations can increase as well as decrease.

Overheads are based upon the Bid's requirement for 1 member of staff work 2-3 days per week along with Rent, Insurances, utilities and other non-dis-chargeable expenses.

In Theme 1 improving public realm (28.6%) this includes enforcement and will be investigated by the Willow Lane BID board.

Communications

The estate coordinator keeps businesses informed through a variety of channels, ensuring everyone stays up-to-date on crucial developments.

Newsletters: A regularly published newsletter serves as a valuable tool for sharing important information about the estate. This could include updates on maintenance projects, upcoming events, safety reminders, and changes to local regulations.

Direct Contact: Businesses can also reach out to the estate coordinator directly for more specific inquiries or to raise concerns. This can be done via email or landline phone number.

Building relationships with new businesses: Each new business receives a personalised welcome through a 1-2-1 meeting with the estate coordinator. This dedicated session allows for an open discussion about the business's needs, expectations, and any initial questions they may have.

“I support the work of the BID whose residents on Brookfields Avenue are located on the back end of the Nature Reserve. The anti-social behaviour at night needs addressing.”

Cllr Caroline Charles
Ravensbury Ward,
London Borough of Merton

BID Map

The Willow BID area will not change in BID 4. A map is also available at www.willowlane.org.uk



The Company

Willow BID Ltd is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee. The company's Memorandum & Articles of Association are available at our website willowlane.org.uk or from the Willow BID office.

The Board

The Willow BID Board is made up of representatives from the Willow Lane business community, who give their time voluntarily to direct the BID and determine how the BID levy should be spent to improve the area for all businesses.

All BID levy payers are encouraged to become company members and to consider becoming a Board Director.

The Willow BID Area

The Willow BID area will not change in BID 4.

The Vote

All businesses now have the opportunity to vote to secure the future of the Willow BID and the investment required to safeguard its future and the prosperity of your business.

A postal ballot will be run from 29 May 2024 and will close at 5.00pm on 27 June 2024. This will be a formal ballot carried out by Engage UK on behalf of the London Borough of Merton Electoral Services department.

All ratepayers are entitled to one vote per hereditament (rated unit of property).

For the ballot to be successful and the BID to continue, the vote must be won on two counts:

Straight majority of businesses voting must vote in favour.

Of those voting 'yes', they must represent more than 50% of all votes cast. If the BID is approved through both tests being met, the BID will operate for five years from 1st July 2024 to 30 June 2029.

We look forward to your continued support.



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“Following my participation in several planning meetings it has reinforced the importance of maintaining the estate in good condition.”

Daniel Lawes
Fix Auto Mitcham



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Ballot timetable

Make your vote count!

15 May 2024

You will receive a Notice of Ballot

29 May 2024

You will be sent a postal Ballot Paper

27 June 2024 at 5.00pm

You need to have cast your vote

28 June 2024

The ballot result will be announced

Get in touch:

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you require any further information about the vote or any aspect of these BID Proposals. We would be happy to discuss in more detail or to arrange a meeting.

Anthony Gopaul, Estate Coordinator
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Willow Lane Estate, Mitcham CR4 4NB

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