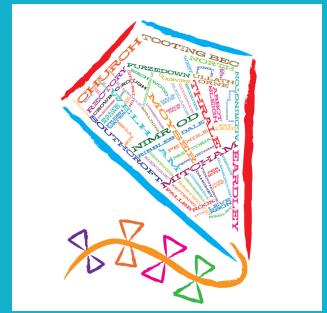


ISSUE 4, MARCH 2023

# FURZEDOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK

## MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER



### WELCOME

Dear FCN Members,

Welcome to our new latest newsletter!

You'll find an update on FCN recent activities - the Quiz Night in November and the Christmas tree lights switch-on on 9 December, both of which were very successful and enjoyable. Among other things you'll also find a very interesting interview with Vito (Ward) and a very interesting article by Helen (Long) about the Furzedown pub, along with updates on our committee meetings. We have also set out the local projects which FCN have supported in 2022.

We are making plans for 2023 and will be discussing these at the AGM which is on Wednesday 29 March (7.00pm for 7.30 start) at the Furzedown Project. You will probably have seen the Chair's report which I have done for this. Please do come to the AGM if you are able. We will be very glad to hear your views about FCN and its work.

Sarah Forester  
Nimrod Road Resident and FCN Chair

As always, we would welcome comments on our ideas as well as looking for more ideas so if you think of something you'd like to share to make Furzedown even more fabulous, email us with the details - [info@furzedown.net](mailto:info@furzedown.net).

#### Current FCN committee:

Chair – Sarah Forester, Vice Chair – Steffi Backhouse  
Treasurer – Hannah Wallden, Secretary – Peter Ramell  
Membership Secretary - Angie Stephenson  
Members: Dawn Thomas, Jo Town, Léonie Cooper, Judi Gasser, Anthony Langan, Lynn Selwyn-Reeves, Adam Seymour-Davies, Anna Godsiff, Monika Ivanova, Sofie Henell, Gemma Dunning.

#### NEWSLETTER TEAM:

CREATOR: DAWN THOMAS  
PROOFREADING: PETER RAMELL

DESIGNER: LYNN SELWYN-REEVES  
DISTRIBUTION: ANGIE STEPHENSON & JO TOWN

### KEY DATES AND EVENTS

#### FCN AGM

29TH MARCH 2023  
7PM  
THE FURZEDOWN  
PROJECT MOYSER ROAD

#### EVENTS

WAR WALK LEAFLET  
LAUNCH

23RD APRIL

...

RUN, WALK, SCOOT

1ST MAY  
10AM TO MIDDAY

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL  
MEDIA



@furzedowncommunitynetwork



@furzedownnetwork



## Spotlight on... Vito Ward Feb 2023 by Dawn Thomas

Vito Ward – local resident (who will be 80 in July) who started the LGBTQ+ Coffee mornings at the Furzedown Project over 6 years ago. Dawn interviewed her in February to find out a little more about Vito and her life.

### Why did you choose to live in Furzedown?

I picked Furzedown because of the house prices. In 1982 I was working in Fulham and wanted to live in West London, but it was too expensive. Furzedown was affordable back then and it was mostly older people who lived in the road, but it was ok. I can't believe that was forty years ago!

### What interesting jobs have you had?

I left school at 15 with no qualifications, I came from a small village in Northumberland. There was not much work around then, so I joined the Royal Navy, which gave me an education. In 1970 after 10 years, I'd made it to Petty Officer but was kicked out aged 27 because I was gay.

After being kicked out of the Navy I secured a living-in job in Dolphin Square where I was able to recover from the trauma before gaining a job in a care home for older people. After promotion I managed a day care facility for people with disability. It was from here I was seconded to train as a social worker. Whilst at Kingston College I was first diagnosed with dyslexia.

After I qualified, I returned to work for Hammersmith and Fulham, opening a new rehab unit for people with physical disabilities. At the same time, I started training as a psychotherapist, subsequently setting up a private practice and taking up a PT job as training officer with social services in Croydon.

Then in 1992 I volunteered with EEP to deliver a training programme to staff working with children with Learning disabilities in Albania.

From 1994-95, I worked with Oxfam and set up a disability group empowering disabled people in Albania. But before I started my role with Oxfam, I had a short break in the UK and it was during that break that I received a strange request from Oxfam: they asked me to drive a Land Rover back to Albania. As I couldn't read maps due to my dyslexia, a friend offered to help with driving. Great fun driving across Europe.

I eventually returned to the UK in 1995.





## How did the LGBTQ+ coffee mornings start?

In the 70s, I became a LGBTQ+ activist, supporting and promoting LGBTQ+ causes. I wasn't going to be in the closet again.

I remember attending my first Pride march in the late 70s/early 80s: those were strange times as the police had to protect us from the Christians. I was getting involved in lots of campaigns but mindful I still had to consider friends who hadn't come out.

In 2003 I had retired and started volunteering at the Project. When Mick became Project Manager, I suggested that we run Coffee mornings for the older LGBTQ+ members of our community, as there wasn't anywhere for the older LGBTQ+ members to go.

So I started the coffee morning over 6 years ago now with David Robson - Chair of LGBTQ+ Forum - who organises monthly screening of LGBTQ+ films at Clapham Picture House. David is now paid by the Furzedown Project to run this group and we have a thriving programme of activities in and outside the project.

**GUEST SPEAKERS**

**WEEKLY GROUP**

**EVERY THURSDAY**

**50+ LGBT COFFEE MORNING**

Every Thursday from 10am

**The Furzedown Project**  
93 Moyser Rd, London SW 16 6SJ

Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum  
@LGBTWandsworth  
wandsworthlgbt@hotmail.co.uk

Wandsworth LGBTQ+ Forum

## Are you still campaigning?

Yes I am. I'm currently involved in the 'Fighting with Pride campaign' for the reinstatement of pensions for LGBTQ+ veterans of the Armed Forces. Due to my work with this campaign, I have been invited by Lord Cashman (former Eastender star) to a reception at the House of Lords – if I can find it as it's not on Google maps!

Also, over the last 12 months I've been campaigning with you Dawn. We've been badgering the Furzedown pub, since it re-opened in 2021, to improve access for those with a disability, which finally happened in the autumn last year. So at last those with mobility issues and/or in a wheelchair can access the pub independently.

## Do you help organise other events?

I have helped organised discos, drag bingo, lots of outings to galleries, museums for the LBGTQ+ community. We always try and have a gay tour guide as you get a different perspective of the historical place you are visiting. I'm helping with "Pride comes to Furzedown". Nimrod residents are coming together in June to have a street 'Pride Party'.





### Why are you still in Furzedown after 40 years?

Denise Broad!!! I used to play badminton with Bob Broad and one day I bumped into Denise who persuaded me to join the Great Gustos, and that was in the early 80s. Working at the Project I particularly loved doing the home visits in the past. I am a volunteer there at the moment as well as participating in other activities and events. The community here is brilliant. We have the Project: I love doing the exercise classes there, the Chat group and the FCN.

### What's your favourite place to go for a meal in Furzedown?

Well actually it's not in Furzedown, but I love the Railway Pub on Greyhound Lane. I always go and watch the Rugby there and I really like the food. I also do like all the lovely curry houses in Tooting

### Who are your role models?

Well I've got 3 heroines and they are:

- Martina Navratilova – considered to be the greatest player of all time, as she's won the most Major tennis titles of the modern era, 59 in total.
- Sandi Toksvig – Comedian and Broadcaster, who formed the Women's Equality Party in 2015, and who has spoken out recently about the Church of England's approach to the LGBTQ+ Community.
- Jackie Foster - a gay rights political activist who came out in 1969 and paved the way for other women. She founded Sappho, a lesbian social group and magazine. I remember her speaking in Hyde Park and being loud and proud about being a lesbian.



### And finally what's your guilty pleasure?

Coronation Street - never miss an episode!

Another guilty pleasure is watching rugby with a pint of Guinness in a pub.

## PRIZE DRAW

With every newsletter, all current members will be entered into a prize draw. The prize this time is a bottle of Prosecco very kindly donated by Dawn Thomas. The winner has been notified.





## COMMITTEE NEWS

We have continued to meet monthly, with a break in December.

We were sorry to say goodbye to Phee Mann-Bryans and are very grateful for her input to committee discussions. We are pleased to welcome to the committee Gemma Dunning, the pastor of Mitcham Lane Baptist Church.

In October we held an open meeting for anyone to come to share ideas about the work of FCN. A number of very useful ideas were raised, which we have been considering for the future. Among other things, FCN can have a role in facilitating initiatives by other people and groups.

A good deal of our discussions have been about FCN events. Following the very successful quiz night on 12 November, we donated £650 to the Foodbank. We made plans for the Christmas light switch on 9 December, which proved to be a very successful event: it was good to have had a number of people and organisations taking part. We have discussed events for the coming year, including the possibility of an event on the Rec in the summer, to help bring people together. We also plan to draw up a list of volunteers for events.

In our discussions we have noted the importance of communications and, particularly with this in mind, we have been taking forward the redevelopment of the FCN website, which we hope will be ready soon. We have also discussed the need to provide more information about FCN and our events to the new part of Furzedown ward.

We discussed the FCN membership subscription and the considerable increase in the costs which FCN has to meet. In the light of this increase we decided to recommend an increase in the membership subscriptions, from £5 to £10 for annual subscription and from £50 to £75 for life membership, and we will putting this to the AGM on 29 March.

A couple of other points from our meetings are:

- we considered how best to spend the remaining grant from Wandsworth Council made earlier for the arts grad project, which the Council were happy we should use on local projects. We have used this money mainly on arts workshops for children at the Faylands Children's Centre in the February half term.
- we made arrangements to produce and print copies of the War Walk booklet produced by Martin Beaver following his very interesting walks about civilian casualties from war time bombing in the Furzedown area.



## HISTORY - The Furzedown Pub by Helen Long

### A brief insight.....

During its 160 year existence the Furzedown has had several names - the Streatham Park Hotel, the Streatham Park Tavern, the Park Tavern, the Samuel Johnson and since 2009, the Furzedown.

The Furzedown stands on the corner of Mitcham Lane and Thrale Roads on the edge of what was until 1863, the Streatham Park Estate. In the late 18th century this was home to Hester and Henry Thrale and was where they entertained some of the most famous worthies of the time including Dr. Samuel Johnson and the painter Joshua Reynolds.

Because of the coming of the railway to Streatham, the Estate was sold in 1863 and was broken up for housing and market gardens. A small section of the original estate survives as the grounds of Streatham Park Bowling Club.

On this corner, a large house was built and bought for £940 by a publican from Penge, William Harding. At this time Streatham was expanding rapidly owing to the development of the railways. Streatham Common Station was built in 1862 and Streatham Station in 1868, making Streatham and what was to become the Furzedown area, easily accessible to the City and Central London.

Realising the potential of the area William Harding opened a beerhouse in the premises known as the Streatham Park Hotel or sometimes as the Streatham Park Tavern. In 1884, he obtained a license to sell spirits as well as beer. Harding remained the landlord until his death in 1898. Photographs of the time show a picturesque large white house with painted stone railings on the roof.

In the 1930s the Streatham Park Hotel was rebuilt in mock Tudor style, this is the large white and black beamed pub we see today.





# FURZEDOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK

## The Furzedown Pub (continued)

A famous former resident was well-known actress, the late Wendy Richard. She is perhaps best known for her roles as Miss Brahms in *Are you Being Served* and as Pauline Fowler in *Eastenders*. Her parents ran the pub in the early 1950s and it was here that Wendy's father, Henry Emberton, committed suicide during a bout of depression.

In the 1980s the pub had a boxing gym in which scenes for the 1986 film *Empire State* were filmed. It has been refurbished many times. The first time in 1992 when it was renamed the Park Tavern, again in 2003 when it was renamed as the Samuel Johnson. There is still a plaque on the wall dating back to 2009 the 300th anniversary of his birth. This was put up by the Streatham Society and is a quote from Samuel Johnson, "There is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is produced as by a good tavern or inn".

Samuel Johnson, the great lexicographer, spent a great deal of time between 1766 and 1782 staying with Hester and Henry Thrale at their house Streatham Park. As this was then the edge of their estate he would have walked through this area many times. Samuel Johnson is chiefly remembered today for his great dictionary of 1755 which standardised English spelling. He is buried in Westminster Abbey but there is a very large statue of him in St Paul's Cathedral as well.

In the last couple of years the pub has changed hands transforming it into a very welcoming pub and hotel with an attractive garden. Hopefully it will still be here to celebrate its 200th anniversary in 40 years time.



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@FURZEDOWNNETWORK

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# FURZEDOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK

## NEWS & EVENTS SINCE THE LAST NEWSLETTER

### QUIZ NIGHT

In November we had our 2nd Quiz Night, this time in the Mitcham Lane Baptist church. With ticket and raffle ticket sales, we raised a total of £650 and 20 hot water bottles which we donated to the Wandsworth Foodbank on behalf of the Furzedown Community.

Thank you to local businesses Good Sorts Jams, Furzedown Art Studio, Urban Wine and Rhonda Gregory, who kindly supported us by donating raffle prizes.



### CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTS SWITCH-ON

Every year we sponsor a Christmas Tree for Furzedown. This year the Christmas Tree Lights 'Switch-on' was on 9th December at 4pm on the corner of Thrale Road and Mitcham Lane.

This year we had Santa's grotto in the garden of the Furzedown Pub, the children from Goldfinch and Furzedown schools, and the wonderful Great Gustos singing Christmas carols, hot chocolate and mince pies donated by St. Alban's church. The FCN hosted children's activities and the Mayor of Wandsworth switched the Christmas tree lights on.





# FURZEDOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK

## NEW FCN MERCHANDISE

We have developed a gorgeous new range of FCN branded products to help our fundraising.

Email us if you'd like to buy one of our products.

Mugs £8

Keyrings £3.50

Tea Towels £10



## LOCAL PROJECTS THE FCN SUPPORTED IN 2022

The Furzedown Community Network will be supporting or contributing to the following local projects this year:

- The St. George's Hospital Fundraising Children's Appeal £500
- Wandsworth Foodbank - proceeds from the FCN Quiz Night in November £650.
- The Gift from Furzedown Christmas Stocking Project £500
- Martin Beaver's World War II War Memorial Map design and printing costs £825
- Defibrillator - in partnership with The Furzedown Project, the FCN are contributing £800 towards the cost of a defibrillator to be located outside the Furzedown Project, and First Aid Training for 12 people.

## THANK YOUS FROM SOME OF THE PROJECTS THE FCN SUPPORTED IN 2022

### Thank you from the 2022 Gift from Furzedown Team

We would like to thank the fantastic Furzedown community for donating gifts and funds, Penwortham and Furzedown Primary school PTAs and the Furzedown Community Network, for enabling us to fill almost 300 Christmas Stockings for children whose families have suffered more hardship last year.

Our 2023 project fundraising has already begun so please follow our social media posts (@giftfromfurzedown) for more information if you would like to help us again this year.

Thank you to **Blue Tree Kitchen** for providing delicious gingerbread, **Pretty Things by Anastasia** and **Milly & Max Accessories** for donating necklaces & bracelets and **Furzedown Art Studio** for stationery gifts.

We would especially like to thank **Aspire Furzedown** for their enormous support over the past 3 years and for very kindly sponsoring us this year.

We would love more local businesses to be involved so if you would like to help, do get in touch.



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@furzedownnetwork

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# FURZEDOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### WAR WALK LEAFLET LAUNCH - 23RD APRIL

The War Walk leaflet - based on Martin Beaver's very interesting walks, and funded by FCN - will be launched on Sunday 23 April at the Furzedown Project. More information to follow soon.

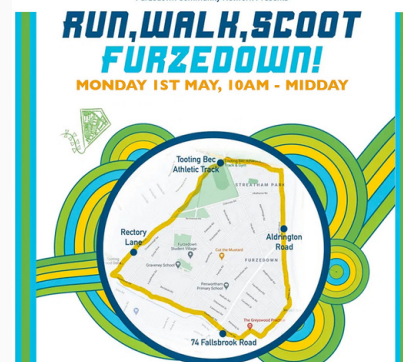


### RUN / WALK / SCOOT - MONDAY 1ST MAY

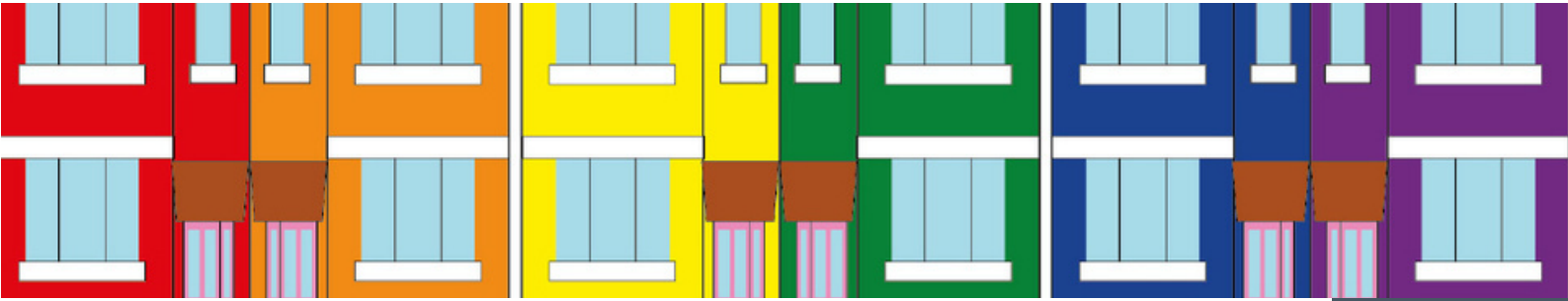
Our popular Run, Walk, Scoot event is back on Bank Holiday Monday 1st May from 10am to midday.

Join us again to follow the map around some of the streets of Furzedown to complete the 5k route. Get your map stamped at each of the checkpoints to receive a medal at the end.

Everyone welcome, come rain or shine!







## PRIDE IN DIVERSITY!

Furzedown is a diverse community in the heart of South London where LGBT+ individuals are an integral part of the neighbourhood's fabric. June is Pride Month, so let's celebrate together!

We will kick off **Furzedown Pride** on Saturday, 17 June with a street party on Nimrod Road between Parklands and Brookview from 2:00pm-5:00pm. Join neighbours and friends for a colourful, glittery extravaganza street party. Bring food and drinks and rainbows and cheer.

Following the street party, the Furzedown Pub is opening its doors for a ticketed event with Drag Queens, queer comedy and of course some amazing anthem music. Everyone welcome, Look for ticket information soon.

To make this very first Pride event amazing, we need the support of volunteers. If you're interested in being part of Furzedown history, contact us at [furzedownpride@gmail.com](mailto:furzedownpride@gmail.com).

You'll be welcomed with open arms!



# Furzedown Pride



## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS - DISCOUNTS OFFERED BY SOME OF OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES

The following local businesses are proud to support the Furzedown Community Network membership scheme by offering a discount to FCN members.

Contact them directly or see our website for information on discounts offered - [www.furzedown.net](http://www.furzedown.net)

### Chemists:

Bradbury Chemist, Moyser Road  
Fairoak, Mitcham Lane  
Pearl Chemist, Tooting

### Food:

Cafe de Niro, Moyser Road  
Mitcham's Plaice, Mitcham Lane  
Naked Loaf Pizza, Moyser Road  
Traditional Fish Bar, Mitcham Lane

### Florist:

Clarkes Florist, Moyser Road 020 8677 0593

### Music & Dance:

Dom Brown Guitar - 07801 234 399  
[www.DomBrown.com](http://www.DomBrown.com)  
Metamorphosis Dance Company -  
[metamorphosis.dnc@gmail.com](mailto:metamorphosis.dnc@gmail.com)

### Art & Photography:

Furzedown Art Studio - 07946 255274  
[info@furzedownartstudio.co.uk](mailto:info@furzedownartstudio.co.uk)  
K&K Stationers, Tooting - 020 8767 2398

### Estate Agents:

Aspire Estate Agent - 020 8769 7900 [www.aspire.co.uk](http://www.aspire.co.uk)  
Iain Selwyn-Reeves Estate Agent - 07766 081462  
[www.ISRBespoke.co.uk](http://www.ISRBespoke.co.uk)

### Hair & Beauty:

Emrah Hairdressing, Moyser Road 0208 769 8692

### Miscellaneous:

Ronpet, Mitcham Lane - 0208 769 6532  
Skyfoot DIY & General, Mitcham Lane - 07404 204554

	If you are a local business interested in offering a discount to FCN members, please get in touch <small>FURZEDOWN COMMUNITY NETWORK</small>
Mitcham's Plaice 266 Mitcham Lane	Bradbury Fairoak <b>PCG</b> Pearl Chemists
Dom Brown Guitar Lessons	Aspire
FURZEDOWN ART STUDIO <small>photography &amp; paintings illustrations &amp; gifts</small>	K&K Stationers & Printers Ltd.
Naked Loaf	IAIN SELWYN-REEVES exp UK Estate Agent
TRADITIONAL FISH BAR 107 Mitcham Lane	METAMORPHOSIS DANCE COMPANY
Cafe De Niro	SKYFOOT LTD DIY & GENERAL STORE
RONPET 112 Mitcham Lane	Clarkes Florist

