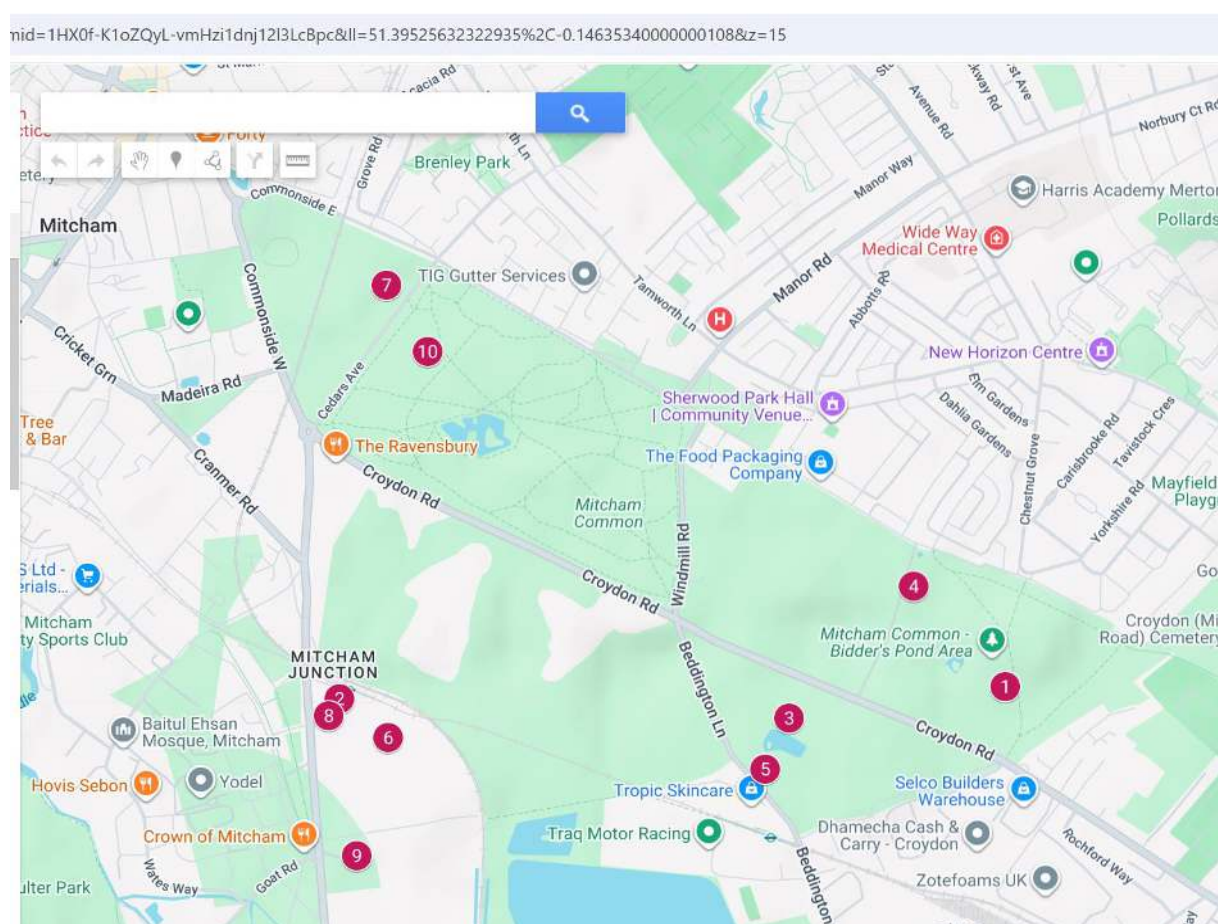


ITEM 6

Administration and Management Report

1. Summer Drought

- 1.1 Wildfires over the period July to end of August 2026. The numbered sequence on the map below indicates the location and order in which the fires occurred.



- 1.2 Wildfire numbers 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 were relatively small grassland fires of between 0.25ha to 1ha in extent. 3 and 5 were larger at approximately 4ha and 2ha respectively. The vegetation will recover and there is unlikely to be any lasting impact on the nature conservation interest of the parcels of land that burnt.
- 1.3 Number 9 was a very significant fire on the Day and Son owned site in Sutton during the late afternoon of 26 August. The fire also burnt a strip of land on

the Gunsite section of the Common. At the time of writing the damage to boundary fencing and the mature Oak trees that demark the boundary of the Gunsite with the Day and Son site has yet to be evaluated.



- 1.4 Water levels in the Common's ponds. Although the level in One Island Pond dropped significantly, it has not completely dried out. It is possible that water used to extinguish wildfires 3 and 5 may have found its way into the pond and topped-up the level.
- 1.5 As was observed during the Annual Inspection, Seven Islands Pond is practically dry with only relatively small shallow pools of water left on its southern side. The Board's policy of keeping fish stocks low in the pond meant that although there was a relatively large number of small fish for birds to feed on as the water level fell, the number of large fish that struggled to survive was probably in single figures. The Environment Agency's latest advice on the impact of drought on fish stocks is not to re-stock ponds that are prone to drying out.



- 3.3 The route is designed to avoid sensitive areas and follow paths that can cope with being used weekly throughout the year. Having said that, the short section marked by a solid red line is prone to flooding during prolonged periods of winter rain. There are no toilets, changing or storage facilities on the Common and only very limited car parking.
- 3.4 The Friends of Mitcham Common were consulted on the Parkrun proposal and expressed concern about the lack of essential facilities, especially car parking. In addition, they were doubtful that the paths would be wide enough to accommodate the high number of runners that might participate and how such a level of usage might impact on other visitors to the Common.
- 3.5 In July 2026 the Chair and Manager attended a meeting with the Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport & Heritage, representatives from the Borough of Sport and Greenspaces Teams to discuss whether the concerns outlined above could be resolved.
- 3.6 The Borough of Sport Team advised that the Cold Blows Pavilion could be made available to Parkrun and the Canons Leisure Centre could provide a limited number of car parking spaces. Moreover, potential Parkrun participants would be made aware that there is very limited car parking and public transport should be used to travel to the venue. In terms of the number of runners, the Sports Team were of the view that it was unlikely to be more than 250 each week.
- 3.7 There was consensus that the section of path that floods is a matter that would have to be resolved in order to facilitate Parkrun. An engineering solution would have to be designed and agreed, with the expectation that funding to undertake the works would be provided by Merton.
- 3.8 In order to move this matter forward, the Board would have to agree in principle that, assuming the path flooding issue can be resolved, the Common would be offered as a Parkrun venue.

Martin Boyle
August 2026