

## Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, March 2010

**Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting** held on Monday 8 March 2010 at 5pm in the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common, London SW19 5NR.

**Present:** Mr D Devons (Chairman)  
Mrs D de Coverly Veale  
Mr D Frampton  
Dr S Frank  
Mr J Horrocks  
Mr N Plastow MBE  
Mr A Simon (Vice-Chairman)

Clerk & Ranger, Chief Executive (Mr G Vincent)  
Deputy Clerk & Ranger (Ms P Graystone)  
PA to the Clerk & Ranger (Miss A Evans)

1 member of the public was present for part of the meeting.

### 03.10.1 Apologies

Sir Ian Andrews

### 03.10.2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The previous minutes were approved subject to several minor amendments.

### 03.10.3 Matters Arising

**Dog-Walkers – Putney Lower Common** – Mr Horrocks reported that, as he now had an e-mail address for Mr Mike Hildesley of Friends of Barnes Common, he would be writing to him about the problem of dog-walkers walking large numbers of dogs on Barnes Common and Putney Lower Common.

**Memorial Bench, Mr Ron Ribbins** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he was meeting Mr Ribbins' son, Mr Steve Ribbins, next week to discuss the siting of a memorial bench. He would also discuss the donation of the model of the Windmill made by Mr Ron Ribbins.

**Cycling Signs** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that the Keepers were continuing their campaign to inform cyclists about the illegality of cycling on paths other than cycling paths.

**Drinking Fountain** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that Mr John Mills had seen three of the corner stones of the horse trough by the drinking fountain near Windmill Road but that was some time ago and they had since been moved. Mr Mills would also be obtaining a quotation to replace all four corner stones.

**Centenary of the Publication of Walter Johnson's Book "Wimbledon Common"** – It was agreed that Mr Plastow and Dr Frank would look at the diary written by Millicent Ashford and consider if it would be worthwhile publishing it. If so, they would consult local bird expert, Mr David Wills, and ex-Conservator, Mr Tony Drakeford, who would contact the family of Miss Ashford for their approval to go ahead. It was agreed that a Sub-Committee should meet in September to consider the matter further. Other options

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would also be considered, such as a pamphlet on nature walks and a pocket field guide to the flora and fauna of the Commons. Dr Frank suggested making contact with the Field Studies Council who had several useful booklets on the Commons that could be sold on their behalf.

**Milestone, Putney Lower Common** – The Clerk & Ranger confirmed that Ms Kate Bradley of the WPCT had been informed of the Conservators' view that the hoarding should remain around the historic milestone on Putney Lower Common until all works on the Putney Hospital site were completed.

### 03.10.4 Clerk & Ranger's Report

**Staff Summer Party** – The Clerk & Ranger suggested that, as the Open Day had been moved to September this year, the Staff Summer Party should not be at the same time, but should be at the usual time in July. A provisional date of Friday 9 July had been set and the party would be held at the London Scottish Golf Club. The Conservators agreed to this suggestion.

**Help for Heroes** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that a cheque had been presented to the local representative of the charity, Help for Heroes, for £960. The money had been raised from the cake stall at the 2009 Stables Open Day and also from the auction of the two large teddy bears at the Staff Summer Party last July.

**British Pathé** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that Bill Rowland, the Senior Keeper, had found a short film about Wimbledon Common on the British Pathé website. The film, which was made in 1959, looked at the work of the Keepers in dealing with byelaws etc. The Clerk & Ranger had investigated the possibility of purchasing the film; British Pathé had informed him that film could either be purchased for the Conservators' archives at a cost of £40 or, alternatively, a licence could be purchased which would allow the film to be shown publicly, for example in the Information Centre, at a cost of £432 for 5 years. The Conservators considered the options and agreed to the purchase of the film for the archives only and to see whether it would be possible to have a link to the film on the Conservators' website.

**West Side Residents' Association** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had recently had dinner with the chairman of the West Side Residents' Association together with another committee member. He had given a brief report as to the fairs and any other events that were taking place on the Common during 2010. This was well received and he was asked by the Chairman of the Association to pass on their congratulations to the Conservators on the way the Common was being managed.

**Beverley Brook – Wimbledon Common** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that Peter Haldane, the Wildlife and Conservation Officer, had spoken again to Mr Andy Theaker at the Environment Agency, who admitted that there was in fact no legal responsibility for Commons' staff to collect litter from the Brook, but it would be "greatly appreciated" if they did. In view of this admission, the Clerk & Ranger had not contacted the National Farmers' Union. As the work to clear the Brook only took approximately two days a year, the Clerk & Ranger suggested that staff carried on doing this work. This was agreed but the Clerk & Ranger was asked to find out if maintenance of the Brook included tree work. He was also asked to look into the legal ownership of the Brook itself, including the banks and the bed.

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**David Hartley Obelisk – Putney Heath** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had had some correspondence with Lady Djemila Cope, who was involved with a group known as the Daughters of the American Revolution. They wished to arrange for the cleaning of the David Hartley Memorial, and also to carry out some minor restoration work. Mr Simon explained that Mr Hartley had been a signatory to the Treaty of Paris of 1783 ending the US War of Independence, hence the group's interest. The Conservators agreed in principle to allow the work. However, since the memorial was listed, planning permission might be required. Full details of any proposed work would have to be agreed with the Conservators before the work began.

### ITEMS FOR REPLY

**Combat Against Cancer** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had received a request from a local resident who wished to organise an event to raise money for cancer charities. The event would be a 5/10K fun run which would also include a small inflatable obstacle course. The run would be mainly held on the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields. The organiser was hoping for approximately 500 participants, and start times would be staggered so as not to inconvenience other Commons' users. There may also be some entertainment for spectators, such as a bouncy castle for children, a raffle, refreshments, fun-fair games, but no loud music. The Conservators agreed in principle to the request but asked the Clerk & Ranger to obtain more details, such as the organiser's experience in organising such an event, and stewarding on the day; and to ensure that proper insurance was in place.

**Women's Aid** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had received a request from the Fundraising Department of the charity Women's Aid, who would like to hold a short fitness "boot camp" at the REMPf to highlight both their work and that they had celebrity supporters taking part in the London Marathon to raise funds for them. The hour-long session would be run by a celebrity supporter and fitness instructors. They were hoping to attract around 200 attendees. A small stage would be required and music would be played during the one-hour session. The Conservators agreed to the request but asked the Clerk & Ranger to inform them that the music volume should be unobtrusive. However, if the volume became, in the view of the Clerk & Ranger, excessive, they would be asked to turn it down. He was also asked to ensure that proper insurance was in place and that the organisers would clean up after the event.

### 03.10.5 Natural History Sub-Committee Report

**Conservators' Walk, Farm Bog** – A date of Friday 16 April was agreed for the Conservators walk, led by Dr Frank, around Farm Bog. Conservators, and any staff that wished to attend, were asked to meet at Springwell Car Park at 2.30pm.

**Management of the Plain** – Dr Frank reported that the Sub-Committee had felt that the Plain should be managed as the Conservators saw fit rather than abide by the agreement with Natural England, which did not include any measures to encourage Skylarks to nest in the area. The Chairman cautioned that the Conservators had signed an agreement with Natural England and should abide by it until such time as it expired or was due to be renegotiated. Dr Frank reported that he had carried out some research and it was clear that the current cutting regime did not encourage Skylarks to nest. As Ms Samantha Lyme had indicated that Natural England might allow some flexibility in the regime, it was agreed that Dr Frank should prepare a detailed paper, setting out his research, and discuss the matter further with Ms Lyme.

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Dr Frank reported that the local bird expert, Mr David Wills, had expressed his concern at the depredation of fledglings at pond margins by dogs, particularly at Bluegates. The committee had considered this point and proposed that small notices be placed around Bluegates and other affected ponds, asking owners to keep their dogs on a lead and out of the water during the nesting and fledging season April-July. This was agreed for action in April. Mr Wills had also suggested further dredging of the Bluegate Ponds. Dr Frank suggested the creation of deeper pools when the Bluegate Ponds dry out in summer to act as refugia for birds and dragonflies. Any pools created would need to be 'puddled' with clay to prevent further leaks, which would be feasible when the water level was low. This was considered by the Board and it was agreed that the matter would be reconsidered at the August meeting depending on the water level.

### **03.10.6 Tibbet's Corner – Local Safety Scheme**

The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had now been contacted by Mr Jonathan Sanders at Wandsworth Council with full details of their proposed road safety improvements at Tibbet's Corner, which would involve a small amount (83m<sup>2</sup>) of Commons land; the Council had offered 85m<sup>2</sup> in exchange. Although it was agreed that generally it appeared to be a good scheme, the Conservators did not have the power under the 1871 Act to exchange land. If the scheme were to proceed, the Council would need to obtain a Compulsory Purchase Order, which the Conservators would not oppose. The Conservators would require the exchanged 85m<sup>2</sup> to be registered to them, and the Council to pay the Conservators' reasonable legal and surveying costs. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to arrange a meeting with Mr Sanders, which Mr Horrocks and the Chairman would attend, to discuss the proposals in more detail. Several other issues would also need to be discussed with Mr Sanders, such as who would clear the vegetation on the northern slip road onto the A3 (trees would need to be protected), and the need for a licence for the Council to erect CCTV cameras on Common land adjacent to the tarmaced path.

### **03.10.7 Putney Hospital**

The Chairman reported that the Sub-Committee were still waiting for confirmation of the final wording of the indemnity clause from Capsticks, the solicitors acting for the WPCT. The Sub-Committee would meet as soon as further details were received with a view to giving the documentation their final approval. As agreed at the January Board meeting, the documentation would then be signed by the Chairman and the Clerk & Ranger without further reference to the Board. This was confirmed.

### **03.10.8 Cannizaro Road**

In November 2009, the Conservators discussed the problem of loose earth on the sides of Cannizaro Road and agreed to reconsider the matter in the Spring. The Clerk & Ranger reported that, although some small potholes had appeared at the side of the road, the kerbstones that the Council had fitted prevented the sides of the road from eroding, as had happened previously. It was agreed that no further action needed to be taken at present. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to follow up the Conservators' request that the Council consider implementing a 20mph speed limit on the road. It was reported

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that the local residents' association were also in favour of such a move and the Clerk & Ranger was asked to speak to the Secretary of the association accordingly.

### 03.10.9 Ashlone Wharf, Putney Lower Common

The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had been contacted by Bruton Knowles, property consultants, who were acting on behalf of the Environment Agency (EA). They were proposing to upgrade the tidal barrier at Ashlone Wharf and, during the work, would need to use adjoining land as a site compound for approximately six months. One area that had been identified was adjacent to the Wharf on land belonging to the Conservators. The Conservators considered the proposal and agreed in principle. However, the Clerk & Ranger was asked to inform Bruton Knowles that several issues would need to be agreed before the Conservators gave their final approval. These included: protection of any trees in the proposed area; agreement that the land would be reinstated to the Conservators' satisfaction; a bond to be deposited with the Conservators' solicitors; and a licence agreement to be drawn up with the EA paying the Conservators' reasonable legal costs. A fee for the temporary loss of use of the Commons land would also be expected.

### 03.10.10 Newsletter

The Conservators considered the draft of the 2010 Newsletter. It was approved subject to several minor amendments to the wording.

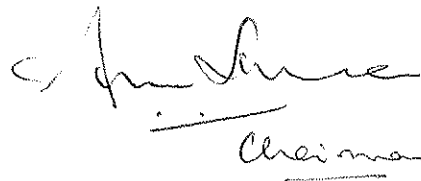
### 03.10.11 Any Other Business

**Windmill Car Park Toilets** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he was expecting the final drawings and costs for the refurbishment of the public toilets from the contractor, Crest, in the next few days. A meeting would be arranged with the contractor prior to the work starting. Mr Horrocks suggested that, once finished, the Conservators should consider an official opening of the toilets, perhaps by a local MP. It was agreed to consider this at a later date.

### 03.10.12 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 12 April 2010 at 5pm at the Information Centre.

The meeting finished at 7pm



*[Handwritten signature]*  
Chairman