

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, November 2009

Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on Monday 9 November 2009 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.

11.09.1 Apologies

Sir Ian Andrews

11.09.2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved subject to one minor amendment.

11.09.3 Matters Arising

New Stag Cottages – The Clerk & Ranger reported that the tenant would be replacing the two shrubs that had not survived in the front garden but the Conservators would pay for them; the conifers in the rear garden were thriving.

Cannizaro Road – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had written to Mr Mario Lecordier at Merton Council to suggest that Cannizaro Road be subject to a 20mph speed limit. No response had yet been received. He had also suggested that white lines be provided along the kerbstones on each side of the roads and this had been done. Mr Frampton commented that the banks at the side of the roads had been made up with loose earth and this was already wearing away where the traffic had strayed outside the white lines; the white lines had also been covered in earth in many places. After some discussion it was agreed that the matter would be reconsidered in the spring.

Old Village Well – Mr Plastow reported that the Wimbledon Society were currently looking into the details of the inscriptions and dates on the old stone that had once covered up the old village well at the junction of Southside Common and Murray Road and had subsequently been stolen.

11.09.4 Clerk & Ranger's Report

Cemetery Cottage – Putney Lower Common – The Clerk & Ranger reported that the Conservators' comments on planning application No. 2009/2890 had been passed to the Wandsworth Council Planning Department. The application had been to convert the use of Cemetery Cottage on the Lower Richmond Road from a service dwelling to a residential dwelling (C3 use). The application had been approved on 16 October.

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London Scottish Golf Club – Disabled Buggies – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had now received a reply from the London Scottish Golf Club to his e-mail asking them to provide an independent health and safety report if they wished the Conservators to consider allowing disabled buggies on the golf course. The Club had stated that, although the request had come from one of their members, it was made on behalf of a friend of that member and had not been an official request from the Club. They believed it was up to the Conservators to carry out any health and safety review. The Conservators agreed that, until such time as an official request was received from one of the Clubs, they would not pursue the matter further.

Putney Heath Fair – The Conservators considered a request by a resident on Putney Hill to reduce the visits by Roses Funfair to Putney Heath from twice to once a year. The Conservators considered the request but, as this had been the only complaint received, and both fairs appeared to be popular to locals, it was agreed that the two visits could go ahead in 2010, if requested.

Santus Circus – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had received a request from Mr Cinch, owner of Santus Circus, asking if the Circus could again visit Putney Lower Common in 2010 from 12 to 20 September. The Conservators agreed to the request.

Guides Centenary Event – October 2010 - The Clerk & Ranger reported that 2010 marked the 100-year anniversary of the Girl Guides. To celebrate this, they were planning a "Promise Renewal Event" and, as the Windmill was the emblem for the local County Guides, the organisers had asked if the event could take place on Wimbledon Common. The event would be attended by approximately 1,000 guides and leaders, and would involve erecting a 100m x 120m marquee, which would house a large screen. Portaloos would also be required in the car park. The organisers had also asked if the event could finish with a short firework display. The Clerk & Ranger had discussed the matter with the organisers and had agreed a location on the eastern side of the Windmill car park. The Conservators considered the request and agreed in principle but asked the Clerk & Ranger to discuss the finer details with the organisers. The Conservators also agreed that it would be appropriate to ask for a small donation towards the overtime costs of the staff. The local police should also be advised.

11.09.5 Natural History Sub-Committee Report

Farm Bog – Dr Frank reported that the clearance of Farm Bog had now been completed and the area had been much improved; further work, including winching out *Molinia* tussocks, would be carried out early next year.

Heather – It was reported that an area of heather, adjacent to Roehampton Ride, which had previously been fenced to allow the heather to regenerate, had been destroyed by rabbits. Dr Frank asked the Conservators if they would agree to the area being re-fenced to allow the heather to grow again. The Conservators agreed to this.

11.09.6 Putney Hospital

Highway Works Plans - As reported at the October meeting, Mr Horrocks, Mr Simon and the Clerk & Ranger met the WPCT's highways advisor on 28 October to discuss the Highway Works plans. This was followed by an on-site meeting on 28 October, at which Mrs de Coverly Veale had also been present, to consider the turning-head off

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Commondale. It was agreed at that meeting that the turning head would not be retained on the plans as, regardless of the size of the turning-head, it would always be large enough for a car to park in it. The Highway Works Plans had therefore been amended accordingly. The Conservators approved the plans subject to several minor changes to Plan 4. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to advise Ms Kate Bradley of the WPCT accordingly.

Land Transfer Agreement TP1 – A revised version of the Land Transfer Agreement (TP1), which would transfer land on the Putney Hospital site to the Conservators as compensation for the proposed access road to be built alongside the site, had now been received from Capsticks. All the changes requested by the Conservators had been made apart from the inclusion of the drawing reference numbers for Plans 1 and 2. In addition, it was agreed that the word “Accessway” should be removed from clause 12.1.2 as there was concern that if it remained, the road might become adopted as “highway”.

Mr Simon commented that it was undesirable to incorporate definitions by reference to another document. Therefore, Paragraph 4 of the Third Schedule should not make reference to definitions of “Occupation” and “Operation” as defined in the Section 106 Agreement. This was agreed and the Clerk & Ranger was asked to advise Mr Middlehurst of Gregsons accordingly.

11.09.7 Windmill Car Park Toilets

Mr Plastow reported that he had re-drawn the plans for the public toilets in the Windmill Car Park and had passed them to the specialist contractor to enable him to provide a revised cost for the work. It was hoped that this would significantly reduce his quotation. There was some discussion as to how to proceed but it was agreed that a decision would be made once the revised costing was received. In the meantime, the Clerk & Ranger was asked to identify one or two other specialist contractors in case the Conservators wanted comparative quotations, although this would be difficult without a detailed specification.

11.09.8 Cycling on the Commons

As requested at the October Board meeting, the Clerk & Ranger reported that he had carried out a survey of cycling signs on the Commons and several areas had been identified where more signs could usefully be placed. The signs had now been ordered and would be put up as soon as possible. He and the Senior Keeper had also spent some time near North View stopping and talking to half a dozen cyclists who had passed and the majority were aware of where they could and could not cycle. Those who did not had been given cycling maps. The Chairman had also prepared a paper for discussion by the Conservators. He had suggested three options on how the Conservators might proceed and, after some discussion, it was agreed to proceed with Option 2, which would involve the Keepers being stationed for an hour or so at sites known for unauthorised cycling, particularly where damage or nuisance was likely. They would be asked to inform cyclists of the Byelaw offence and hand them each a copy of the cycle route map and ask them to keep to designated cycle routes in future.

11.09.9 Archiving

As requested at the October meeting, Mr Simon Fenwick, the Archivist, had provided a brief work plan to give the Conservators some idea of how much longer the archiving

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work would take. He had reported that all remaining boxes would be catalogued and indexed by Easter 2010; photographs, press cuttings, maps and plans should be finished by the end of 2010. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to provide details of the costs of the work for the next Board meeting.

11.09.10 Any Other Business

Tibbetts Corner Roundabout – Mr Horrocks reported that he had attended the Wandsworth Planning and Transport Committee meeting where it had been reported that there were plans to alter Tibbetts Corner Roundabout in order to make it safer for traffic. However, this would involve using Common land. The Conservators agreed that they were likely to object strongly to this once official notification was received.

Elm Trees – Putney Lower Common – Mrs de Coverly Veale reported that an elm tree on Putney Lower Common had been vandalised. A lower branch had almost been broken off and she had splinted it in the hope that it would re-grow.

Sponsored Dog Walk for Cancer Research – The PA to the Clerk & Ranger reported that a request had been received to hold a sponsored dog walk in aid of Cancer Research UK. She explained that, although this would technically be in breach of Byelaw 7, another sponsored dog-walk had traditionally been allowed in January in aid of St Raphael's Hospice. The Conservators agreed in principle to the request but insisted that all dogs should be kept on a lead and that total numbers be restricted to that allowed for the St Raphael's walk.

Oxford-v-Cambridge Cross Country – Mr Simon reported that the annual Oxford-v-Cambridge cross-country race would take place on 5 December.

Clerk & Ranger's Party – The Conservators confirmed that they would all be attending the Clerk & Ranger's Party at the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club on 4 December.

11.09.11 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 14 December 2009 at 5pm at the Information Centre.

The meeting finished at 6.50pm