

## Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, November 2011

**Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting** held on Monday 14 November 2011 at 5pm in the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common, London SW19 5NR.

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

**In attendance:** Clerk & Ranger, Chief Executive (Mr Gordon Vincent)  
Deputy Clerk & Ranger (Ms P Graystone)  
PA to the Clerk & Ranger (Ms A Evans)

1 member of the public for part of the meeting

### 10.11.1 Apologies

Sir Ian Andrews

### 10.11.2 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2011 were approved subject to one minor amendment.

### 10.11.3 Matters Arising

**Travellers** - The Chairman reported that he had not yet studied the Byelaws under which Wandsworth Council were able to move on travellers without the need for court proceedings.

**Signage around the Commons** – The Chairman reported that the designs had been updated in accordance with the details approved by the Conservators, and checked. It was hoped to have a quotation of the cost available for consideration at the December meeting.

**Wimbledon Village Well** – Mr Plastow reported that he had contacted a stonemason about a replacement stone for the old Village well on Rushmere. He was awaiting his estimate of the cost. The Clerk & Ranger suggested that an oak plinth might be a worthwhile addition.

### 10.11.4 Clerk & Ranger's Report

**Assistant Groundsman REMPF** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that John Madden had retired as Assistant Groundsman at the REMPF after 29 years of service. Mr Jason Cheney had been appointed to succeed him. Mr Cheney had previously been employed as an Assistant Groundsman in Scotland and held a qualification in green-keeping and groundsmanhip. After marrying and moving to London he had more recently been employed as a Warehouse Operative as he had been unable to get a position as a groundsman. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to Mr Madden to thank him for his long service.

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**Remembrance Sunday** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had laid a wreath on behalf of the Conservators at the Memorial Service in Wimbledon Village: a Mounted Keeper had also been in attendance. Mounted Keepers were also in attendance at the services at the Roehampton and the REMPF Memorials.

**Clerk & Ranger's Party** – The Clerk & Ranger reminded the Conservators that the Clerk & Ranger's Party would take place on Friday 2 December at the Royal Wimbledon Golf Club.

**Election Timetable** – The Clerk & Ranger reminded the Conservators that the proceedings for the forthcoming election of Conservators would begin shortly. The Statutory Notice would be placed in the local papers on 1 and 8 December. It had also been displayed at various sites around the Common and on the website that week. Conservators were further reminded that an information meeting for prospective candidates would take place in the Information Centre at 6.30pm on Thursday 15 December.

**Thames Tunnel** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that Thames Water was now advertising Phase Two of their consultation on the Thames Tunnel. They were now proposing to use a site at Carnwath Road, Riverside in Fulham as a main drive shaft site instead of the Barn Elms playing fields, though they still intended to intercept the West Putney combined sewer outfall at the Barn Elms site. Mr Horrocks recommended that the Conservators should visit the exhibition to understand the potential impact on Putney Lower Common.

**Christmas Card Rota** – The PA to the Clerk & Ranger distributed the rota for Conservators selling Christmas cards in the Windmill car park for the following three weekends.

**Refurbishment of REMPF Pavilion** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that the refurbishment of the REMPF Pavilion was almost complete.

**Traffic controls during the Olympics** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had contacted Stephen Hammond MP to ask if he would support the Conservators' position regarding the proposed temporary changes to turning into Windmill Road. Mr Hammond was sympathetic to the Conservators' position and had written accordingly to Transport for London. TFL had responded in greater detail but had nonetheless affirmed their intention to restrict traffic entering Windmill Road from Parkside during the Olympic tennis event at the All England Club. It was agreed that a further letter should be sent to TFL reiterating that those restrictions would cause disproportionate disruption and inconvenience. A further opportunity to comment would arise when the official consultation began.

**Archives** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that an introductory article about the archive had now been placed on the Conservators' website, together with a link to the archive index.

**The Spencer** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that the tables and benches placed on Putney Lower Common outside The Spencer had now been removed for the winter. A further e-mail had been received from the owner confirming that he was in discussion with Wandsworth Council about whether planning consent was required.

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**Wimbledon Windmilers** – No further proposals had been heard from the Windmilers regarding the Triathlon they had hoped to organise on the Common in 2012.

**“Ball Boys Party”** – A response had now been received from the AELTC and a meeting was being arranged for a date in early December. Mr Frampton was unable to attend on that date but would brief the Chairman and alert the new Safer Neighbourhood Team sergeant.

**North West Wimbledon Residents’ Association** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had made a short presentation on aspects of the Common to the North West Wimbledon Residents’ Association on Wednesday 12 October. The presentation had been well-received: the issues raised had included the Levy, the Putney Hospital site, the Conservators’ elections, barbeques, tree planting and dog-waste bins.

**Harlequins Rugby League** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that the Harlequins Rugby League club, who occupied part of the REMPF pavilion, had re-branded themselves and were reverting to their previous club name of London Broncos.

### ITEMS FOR RESPONSE

**Annual Open Meeting 2012** – The Clerk & Ranger confirmed that the Annual Open Meeting in 2012 was due to take place at St Paul’s Church Community Centre on Inner Park Road. The hall had been provisionally booked for Wednesday 13 June 2012. The Conservators confirmed their approval of the arrangements.

**Book – Wimbledon and Putney Commons: A Natural History** – The Conservators discussed the Clerk & Ranger’s proposal that the price of the Natural History book be further reduced to £5. Mr Frampton expressed concern that this might distract public attention from the new Walter Johnson booklet when it was put on sale. It was therefore agreed that the price would be reduced only for the Christmas period, but would revert to £10 after Christmas. Mr Plastow said he would ask the manager of the Waterstones’ bookstore in Wimbledon if he would take some copies for sale in his store.

**Community Trust for Morley Park** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that Berkeley Homes had now started their redevelopment of the site of the former Atkinson Morley hospital. They would be transferring the Metropolitan Open Land within the site to Merton Council to form a new public open space known as Morley Park. A proposal was being put forward that the Park should be managed by a Community Trust. A not-for-profit body for this purpose called Morley Park Trust Limited, whose Chairman, Mr Nick Smith, had asked if either the Clerk and Ranger or one of the Conservators would be willing to join its Board to assist in setting up the management arrangements. For the time being, they were seeking only an “in principle” agreement: the Conservators are asked to consider this request. After some discussion, it was agreed that the Clerk & Ranger should be permitted to offer his services to the Trust, as long as this did not conflict with his current duties.

**Queen’s Jubilee 2012** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had been contacted by the London South West Sector Army Cadet Force asking for the Conservators’ permission to hold an event on the Common to mark the Queen’s Jubilee in 2012. Few details were available at present but it seemed it would involve the lighting of a bonfire beacon. The Conservators agreed in principle to the request subject to having full details

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of the proposal. They also required complete control over the form of the beacon, as it was imperative that there be no damage to the Commons. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to respond accordingly.

**Letter from Local Resident, Dr Eric Hunt** – The Clerk & Ranger reported that he had received a letter from a local resident, Dr Eric Hunt, requesting the Conservators to reconsider their previous refusal to grant certain short-term leases, such as those for mobile phone masts. The Conservators considered the request but it was clear that Section 34 of the 1871 Act required the Conservators to resist all encroachments and to keep the Common in its natural state. Furthermore Section 35 stated that it was unlawful to lease any part of the Commons. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to reply accordingly.

### 10.11.5 Natural History Sub-Committee

**The Plain** – Mr Frampton reported that the visit to Richmond Park would be taking place on 21<sup>st</sup> November.

**Western Riverside Environment Fund** – Mr Horrocks reported that he was preparing specifications for contractors to plant trees at the Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields car park and to carry out on-going maintenance for two seasons, thereby sparing the Commons' staff from any extra work in carrying out the plan. However the proposal was dependent on the success of an application for funding to the Western Riverside Environment Fund.

**Roehampton Church School** – It was reported that the school had requested permission to place some logs on the Common, close to the new path previously approved by the Conservators, for use as seats for the children. It was agreed that the Clerk & Ranger would look into what was required and make recommendations. Mr Horrocks reported that, despite the agreement with the school, the gate to the playground was not being left open out of school hours. It was unlocked, but not left open. The Clerk & Ranger was asked to look into the matter, particularly the wording of the agreement regarding the playground

**American Elm Trees** – Mr Devons asked whether American Elm trees should be planted on the SSSI area of the Common, where only native species may be planted. The Sub-Committee would discuss this at their next meeting.

**Strategic Tree Planting Report** – The Conservators congratulated Mr Haldane on his comprehensive report. The Chairman commented that the report generated the need for an annual work plan. Some consideration was needed as to whether resources should be put into removing invasive holly or planting new trees. The character of the Common appeared to be gradually changing due to over-enrichment of the soil, itself partly resulting from dog-waste.

Mr Frampton commented that the report did need a paragraph detailing the priorities. It was agreed that the Sub-Committee should discuss and agree priorities for approval by the Board.

The Clerk & Ranger commented that the Wildlife and Conservation Officer already had a full workload, so care was needed to avoid making his workload excessive. As things stood, his office workload was already interfering with the performance of his practical

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duties out on the Common. This was noted. The Chairman asked whether the Sub-Committee had any Terms of Reference. It was agreed this should be looked into.

### 10.11.6 Walter Johnson Booklet

Mr Frampton reported that, following recent conversations with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, it had been agreed that Mr Cameron Brown would sell the new booklet in commercial outlets and the Conservators would sell in their usual outlets, i.e. the Ranger's Office and the Windmill Museum, and on stalls at the Open Day and the Village Fair. Although the Conservators had allowed a budget of £875, the cost price for 300 copies was £3.00 each i.e. £900. He therefore recommended an order for 300 copies, as this represented better value than 250 copies at £3.50 (£875). This was agreed. It was also suggested that an event to launch the booklet would be appropriate: it was agreed to give this further consideration.

### 10.11.7 Byelaw Amendments

The Chairman reported that he had not yet written to Mr Gorringe at Defra.


### 10.11.8 Any Other Business

**Windmill Museum – Alarm System** – Mr Plastow reported that a recent assessment had revealed some major shortcomings with the alarm system at the Windmill. The major concern was that the fire alarm system was not audible to anyone at the top of the windmill. Moreover the arrangements for a message to be telephoned to either the Duty Officer or the Fire Brigade had been found to be ineffective. The Clerk & Ranger commented that he thought it sensible for the fire alarm to be connected directly to the Fire Brigade to ensure the fastest response possible. The Chairman commented that the range of alarm systems had improved since this one was installed. He thought the current system would need to be completely replaced with one more suitable for a museum housed in a historic building. The matter would receive further consideration.

### 10.11.9 Date of Next Meeting

Monday 12 December 2011 at 5pm at the Information Centre

The meeting closed at 7pm



Chairman