



**CONSERVATORS' PUBLIC MEETING**  
to be held on  
**Monday 3 June 2024 at 4.30pm**  
in the Information Centre, Ranger's Office,  
Manor Cottage, London SW19 5NR

## **AGENDA**

### **PART A(1) PUBLIC**

- 06.24.1 Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence**
- 06.24.2 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting**
- 06.23.3 WPCC Board Meetings**
- i. Resolutions of the Board Meeting 8 April 2024 **Page 1**
  - ii. Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 8 April 2024 **Page 2**
- 06.23.4 Committee Matters **Page 9****
- i. Approval of the Chairman of:
    - a. Finance and Investment
    - b. Friends Committee
  - ii. Approval of the Friends Committee Terms of Reference **Page 10**
- 06.24.5 Matters Arising **Page 13****
- 06.24.6 Chief Executive's Report **Page 14****
- 06.24.7 Conservation Update **Page 18****
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- 06.24.9 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report **Verbal****
- 06.24.10 WPCC Forum/Group Meetings**
- To note the minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum held on 11 March 2024 **Page 27**
- 06.24.11 Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting**
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**CONSERVATORS' CONFIDENTIAL MEETING**  
to be held on  
**Monday 3 June 2024 at 4.30pm**  
in the Information Centre, Ranger's Office,  
Manor Cottage, London SW19 5NR

## **AGENDA**

### **PART A(2) CONFIDENTIAL**

In accordance with the Resolution from the Board meeting held on 12 July 2021, this part of the meeting is considered confidential and therefore closed to members of the public.

**06.24.12     Declarations**

- i.   Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests in Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting
- ii.  Updates to the previously submitted Declarations of Interest Form

**06.24.13     WPCB Board Meetings**

- i.   Minutes of the Confidential Board meeting held on 8 April 2024

**06.24.14     Matters Arising**

**06.24.15     Committee Matters**

- i.   Co-optees
- ii.  To receive the Minutes of the Friends Committee held on 25 April 2024

**06.24.16     Chief Executive's Report – Confidential**

**06.24.17     Audit 2023/24**

**06.24.18     Financial**

- i.   Management Reports and Accounts March 2024
- ii.  Management Report and Accounts April 2024
- iii. Reserves Policy

**06.24.19     Annual Open Meeting 2024**

**06.24.20     Constitutional Matters**

**06.24.21     Licences and Leases**

**06.24.22     Top Ten Risks**

**06.24.23     Fundraising Update**

**06.24.24     Returning Officer's Report Election 2024**

**06.24.25     Items for Inclusion in a Media Release by the Board**

**06.24.26     Items for Future Consideration**



## Wimbledon and Putney Commons

### Resolution agreed at the Board Meeting held on Monday 8 April 2024

#### Part A1 Public 8 April 2024

There were no Resolutions taken in this part of the meeting.

#### Part A2 Confidential

##### 02.24.17 Committee Matters

Resolution

The Board resolved to provisionally agree to reappoint the currently serving co-optees to the Audit and Risk Committee, Constitution and Friends Committee, subject to the agreement of the respective appointees and the committees.

##### 04.24.24 Financial

Resolution

The Board resolved to formally approve an update to WPCC's bank mandate to include the newly elected Chairman of WPCC as an authorised signatory following the retirement of the past Chairman following WPCC's 2024 triennial elections.

#### Present

Conservators: Mauro Mattiuzzo (MM)  
Oliver Bennett (OB)  
Sue Bucknall (SB)  
Michael Johnston (MJ)  
Peter Shortt (PS)

Officers: Colin Cooper, Chief Executive (CE)  
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive and Communications Officer  
Maggie May, Fundraising Manager

Apologies: Mr David Brown (DB), Conservator  
Mr William Liu (WL), Conservator  
Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk and Ranger  
Peter Haldane, Conservation and Engagement Officer (C&EO)  
Philip Warner, Management Accountant

**Draft Public Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on  
Monday 8 April 2024 at 4.30pm at the Information Centre, Manor Cottage,  
London SW19 5NR**

**Conservators:** Mr Mauro Mattiuzzo (MM)  
Mr Oliver Bennett (OB)  
Mrs Sue Bucknall (SB)  
Mr Michael Johnston (MJ)  
Mr Peter Shortt (PS)

**Officers:** Colin Cooper, Chief Executive (CE)  
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive/Communications  
Officer (EA to CE/CO)  
Maggie May, Fundraising Manager (FM)

**Members of the public:** No members of the public attended.

Peter Shortt took the chair for the first two items

**04.24.1 Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the following:

Mr David Brown (DB), Conservator  
Mr William Liu (WL), Conservator  
Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk and Ranger  
Philip Warner, Management Accountant  
Peter Haldane, Conservation and Engagement Officer (C&EO)

**04.24.2 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting**

None

The CE took the chair for the next item.

**04.24.3 Election of Chairman**

One Conservator, Mauro Mattiuzzo, put his name forward to take up the role of Chairman of the Conservator. His nomination was proposed by SB and seconded by MJ. There being no other candidates, Mr Mattiuzzo was duly elected as Chairman.

**04.23.4 Consideration of Appointment of Vice Chairman**

The Board discussed the need for there to be a Vice-Chairman appointed.

SB had expressed an interest in taking up the role, with a view to easing the burden on the Chairman by taking on some of the less pressing issues and also some of the external meetings that are not necessarily critical to WPCC but are important as part of community engagement.

The Board supported proceeding on that basis and agreed that it would be appropriate to have a brief Terms of Reference for the role to clearly delineate

tasks and responsibilities. The CE was asked to consider and prepare the Terms of Reference and the nomination process for discussion at the next Board meeting, taking into account any restrictions that might be put on the role in either the WPCC Act the Commissioner's clauses, or charity legislation.

**Action: Chairman/CE**

#### **04.23.5 Board and Committee Matters**

The Board noted and received the CE's report setting out the background and procedures for Board and Committee meetings as well as future Board meeting dates. The following matters were discussed:

##### **Board meeting dates**

With regard to dates, it was noted that the meeting date of 8 July would need to be changed as it left a gap of more than three months to the October meeting. AEH would contact Conservators to arrange an alternative date.

**Action – EA to CE**

##### **Part B meetings**

It was agreed that the Conservators would discuss amongst themselves whether they required a Part B meeting and, if so, when it would be held. There was a preference to hold them after the Part A2 meeting but it was recognised this would make for a long meeting. The dates would remain in the diary for the time-being, other than for the one scheduled for 15 April which would not go ahead.

##### **Committees/Forums**

The newly elected Conservators had met to consider which Committees they would wish to sit on. Along with existing Conservators, the membership of each Committee was agreed as follows:

Finance and Investment – MM and DB  
Constitution – MM, MJ, SB  
Audit and Risk – PS (until June), MJ  
Friends – SB, DB, WL  
Wildlife and Conservation Forum – OB, MJ, SB

It was noted that although quorate with two Conservators, it was preferred to have three Conservators on the Finance and Investment Committee. It was hoped that either the new Home Office or MoD Appointed Conservators would have financial experience and would be prepared to join that Committee.

It was noted that Conservators were not permanent members of the Stakeholder Forum, but could be invited to attend if there was a specific issue to be discussed with them.

## **Terms of Reference**

The Terms of reference for each Committee would be approved at its first meeting and would then come back to the Board for approval at the following Board meeting.

## **Meeting Dates**

The calendar of dates was noted. The EA to CE would circulate a larger version of the calendar.

It was noted that the next Wildlife and Conservation Forum would take place on 7 May and not 14 May as currently scheduled. Several Conservators expressed an interest in attending the next meeting.

With regard to the recent amendment to the Terms of Reference to allow Conservators to attend meetings of a Committee of which they were not a member, this would need to be reconfirmed at the next meeting of the Committees.

## **Action: EA to CO**

### **04.23.6 WPCC Board Meetings**

The Resolutions and Minutes of the Board Meeting held on 12 February 2024 were approved by the Conservators who were present at the meeting.

### **04.24.7 Matters Arising**

There are no matters arising.

### **04.24.8 Chief Executive's Report**

The Board received and noted the Chief Executive's Report. The following points were highlighted:

Keepers - The wet weather had resulted in a lot of dog-walkers using the drier parts of the Common, mainly the golf course, and this had resulted in some damage with dogs running on the greens – in some instances being encouraged to do so by their owners/walkers throwing balls for them.

A strange incident had taken place where a gentleman removed several flags from the Greens which he then hid. He went on to destroy one of the election banners and ripped signs off the noticeboards. The Keepers were in pursuit but as he could hear their approach in the buggies, he disappeared into the undergrowth and hid from them.

Maintenance - There had been ongoing management of the golf fairway woodland edges and acid grassland habitats to push the woodland edge back. Regular tree safety work was underway, including some work along the A3 which had been requested by TFL.

The maintenance team had also been integral to the preparation of the Rosslyn Park Rugby Schools 7's festival. Drainage work had been carried out in many forms over the winter months, with daily emptying of silt traps and ensuring ditches and culverts are flowing, to the installation of large overflow pipes at the

Primrose Valley ditch, to combat and control the huge quantities of rainwater flowing down to the Queensmere from the heathland plateau catchment area.

REMPF – The wettest February on record had taken its toll on the Playing Fields. The underground chambers had to be pumped out on an almost daily basis, and on some days several times a day. The worst was on Tuesday 12 March 2024 when the team pumped out over 15,000 litres of water from the two chambers. The chambers collect water from the Playing Fields and the water is manually discharged into the Beverley Brook.

Despite the weather, the Playing Fields were able to host the Rosslyn Park National Schools Sevens on 18-21 March. 2,276 games were played over the course of the five days.

The Chairman asked that the Board's thanks to the REMPf Groundsmen and the Maintenance team be recorded. The work involved to get the pitches fit for play was remarkable and the Board were very appreciative of their efforts. The Chairman had attended the event and several of the coaches and parents had praised those efforts.

**Action: CEO**

**Merlin the Owl/Swans** – There was no further news on Merlin's disappearance. The male swan had been injured whilst trying to fly out of the Queensmere and been taken away for treatment by the Swan Sanctuary. His wing was broken and had since had to be amputated. The female had also been injured whilst attempting to take off but had sadly died from her injuries.

**Our Roehampton/Roehampton Women's Network** – The EA to the CE has attended meetings of both the "Our Roehampton" and the Roehampton Women's Network. Whilst the discussions are not always relevant to the Commons, it is a good way of engaging with the Roehampton community. It is hoped to organise several walks with the groups over coming months to encourage them to use the Commons more.

The Chairman commented that he was very keen on greater engagement with the Roehampton community and asked that any feedback from the meetings be reported to the Board. OB considered that the expanded conservation department would allow for further community engagement through the environment. The CE had also met with the Dean of Science at the Roehampton University regarding some collaboration between the two organisations, perhaps with PhD projects.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the FM confirmed that the charity had received funding from South Western Rail for the restoration of the path at Beverley Brook. Further funding might be available and this would be monitored.

**Action: FM**

**Easter Egg Hunt** – The Commons' annual Easter Egg Hunt took place on Friday 29 March and Sunday 31 March. The first day was managed by WPCC, with the Sunday being managed by the Windmill Trustees. Both days were a huge success with approximately 500 children taking part overall, raising over £600 that will be shared between WPCC and the Windmill Trustees.

#### 04.24.9 Conservation Update

The Board received and noted the Conservation and Engagement Officer's report. In his absence, the CE highlighted the following:

##### **Heathland Management**

Volunteers had made good progress thinning young silver birch, holly, holm oak and Turkey oak from the edge of the heathland and the nearby woodland. This work had now stopped as bird nesting season was underway.

##### **Grassland Management**

The areas of heathland that are located around the edge of the golf course and the areas of acid grassland which form the semi-rough and rough provide an important part for the Commons SSS and SAC designations. To help protect and enhance these areas of grassland and heathland, over the past few months we have reduced the coverage of invasive scrub along six of the fairways.

##### **Crossroads Meadow:**

Crossroads meadow (also known as Telegraph Meadow) is a small area of grassland which is located close to Telegraph Road on Putney Heath. To help further enhance this area of the commons, during March 2024 we carried out a wildflower planting event with children and teachers from Wimbledon High School and Granard Primary School which is in Roehampton. Approximately 40 children attended this event and between the two schools, money was raised to pay for the wild flower seeds and bulbs and three bird boxes were also purchased and positioned along the edge of the nearby woodland. There had been very positive feedback from the schools.

OB mentioned that this work had not been included in the Land Management Plan (LMP) and, although he understood opportunities arose, thought should be given to prioritising the ambitious projects in the LMP when possible. It was agreed that in general, staff would always try to match funds to these projects.

**Copse bindweed** – Following on from the Winter Talk, the CandEO had met with the speaker, Dr Mark Spencer, to discuss the possibility of re-introducing Copse bindweed (*Fallopia dumetorum*) to the Commons.

#### 04.24.10 Fundraising Update

The Board received and noted the Fundraising Manager's report.

The FM reported that, subsequent to the report, the charity had received a substantial legacy from an estate. Following discussion with the estate's executor, the use of the money would be restricted to woodland preservation work. The CandEO was working on projects that could now be undertaken.

Wimbledon High School had donated just over £1,000 to be put toward first aid equipment, particularly a defib for the Maintenance Centre.

WPCC has been awarded £130,000 from the Mayor of London's *Rewild London Fund* to take forward a transformative project to rewild Queensmere pond. Last



year, WPCC was awarded a grant of £14,290 by the Rewild London Fund to carry out a feasibility study into improving the ecological value of Queensmere. This project is now coming to an end with final reports due on 12 April 2024. The findings and recommendations from a first stage report enabled WPCC to apply for a larger grant to deliver some of the proposals in November 2023 and were delighted to hear in February 2024, that our application was successful. The final report on the project was expected shortly.

**The Big Give** - WPCC was taking part in this year's Green Match Fund, a match funding campaign run by the Big Give. Taking place between 18 and 25 April 2024, all donations made via WPCC's campaign page would be doubled. The fundraising target was £5,000, to be doubled to £10,000. Funds would be put towards heathland restoration.

SB thanked the FM for all her hard work on fundraising for the charity. She would be very much missed whilst she was on maternity leave for 12 months.

#### **04.24.11 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report**

SB gave a verbal update on the Friends.

SB explained the background to the setting up of the Friends in 2019. It was set out to do two things:

- Fundraising for WPCC - in 23/24 some £48,000 was raised which had been hugely beneficial to the Commons. It was hoped that the target for 24/25 would be around £50,000 and that these funds could be put towards specific projects.
- Community engagement and collective celebration – SB considered there was room for improvement in community engagement and hoped that the Friends could expand on this in future. She suggested that representatives from Wimbledon, Putney and Roehampton be sought who could input information on what communities in their respective areas would like in terms of engagement with WPCC. This was agreed.

It was noted that three of the newly-appointed Conservators were Friends before being appointed and it highlighted how important the Friends could be in involving people with the Commons.

#### **04.24.12 WPCC Forum/Group Meetings**

The Board received and noted the minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum held on 9 January 2024.

OB commented that the next Forum meeting would be considering the 2023 monitoring report and Conservators not on the Forum might find this an interesting meeting to attend.

The dates of future nature-related events was noted. Volunteers on the forum contributed significantly to the events.

On 2 May, a bird walk was being held for scouts.

#### **12.23.13 Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting**

There were no questions raised.

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators	3 June 2024	06.24.4
<b>Subject:</b> Committee Matters	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Chairman of Wimbledon and Putney Commons	<b>For Decision</b>	
<h1>Summary</h1>		
<p>The report contains updates on the WPCC Committees.</p> <p><b>Resolution</b></p> <p>That the Board approve the appointment of David Brown as Chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee and Sue Bucknall as Chairman of the Friends Committee.</p> <p>That the Board approve the Terms of Reference for the Friends Committee.</p>		

## Chairmen

The Committees that have met since the last Board meeting on 8 April 2024 have agreed the Chairmen as follows:

- i. Finance and Investment Committee – David Brown
- ii. Friends Committee – Sue Bucknall

The Audit and Risk and Constitution Committees, along with the Wildlife and Conservation Forum, will appoint their Chairmen at their next meetings.

## Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the Friends Committee were agreed unanimously by those present at the last meeting and are recommended to the Board for approval. (Appendix 1)

**Friends and Community Engagers of  
Wimbledon and Putney Commons  
Conservators Committee  
Terms of Reference**

## **I. Background**

In recognition of the opportunity to capitalise and build on the goodwill of the local community, the establishment of a supporters' organisation was incorporated into WPCC's Vision and Strategy, which received WPCC's Board ('the Board') approval in June 2017.

"Action C1.1 (c): Initiate a Supporters of Wimbledon and Putney Commons as a means to help raise the profile of the Commons within local communities and to assist with raising funds to support specific initiatives."

Following the February 2018 triennial elections, the newly constituted WPCC Board further endorsed the objective as part of its review of the 2018 to 2021 Business Plan in May 2018. The proposed Friends' model was approved in principle by the Board at its meeting of 11 February 2019 with further consideration and approval by the Board at its meeting of 7 April 2019.

## **II. Organisational Structure, Purpose and Constitutional Considerations**

The Board agreed that the Friends and Community Engagers of Wimbledon and Putney Commons (hereinafter known as the "Friends of WPCC") would be Conservator-led and form an integral part of WPCC, managed by Conservators and supported by officers, to achieve two objectives as set out below.

1. Fundraising - Provide a structure and mechanism through which members of the local community are able to register their ongoing support of WPCC, including both annual subscription fees and other initiatives, and to be recognised for this support principally through their inclusion in a community of like-minded individuals with a shared sense of purpose;

2. Community Engagement and Collective Celebration - Provide a structure and mechanism through which members of the local community are able to actively support Conservators in the management and delivery of a limited number of special events designed to promote community engagement and collective celebration.

It was agreed that the Friends of WPCC would not be a separate organisation with its own constitution and funds and that everything done in relation to the recognition, organisation and encouragement of supporters would be carried out by WPCC or its officers acting under their control, and paid for from WPCC's general funds (ie, the WPCC Conservancy Fund) referred to in section 82 of the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act 1871 ('the 1871 Act'):

"Section 82. The receipts of the Conservators from rates under this Act, and, their other revenue under this Act shall be carried to and constitute a fund to be called the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservancy Fund, and that fund (in this Act referred to as the Conservancy Fund) shall be applied from

time to time in and for the purposes of the execution of the duties of the Conservators under this Act and not otherwise."

Charity law recognises the necessity for fundraising and facilitates its effectiveness by enabling charity trustees to make sensible arrangements which may encourage and regulate their fundraising. (Specific guidance on fund raising by charities has been produced by the Charity Commission; refer to CC20 - Charity Fundraising.)

Although the 1871 Act contains very little mention of fundraising, there is an express power to accept subscriptions and donations in section 83 of the 1871 Act:

"Section 83. The Conservators from time to time may receive subscriptions or donations in aid of their revenue, and shall carry the same to the Conservancy Fund, or shall, if the respective subscribers or donors so desire, apply the same for particular purposes of this Act."

It is clear from section 83 that WPCC is empowered to accept donations and subscriptions, which may be given either for general revenue purposes or for specific purposes within the ambit of WPCC's purposes under the 1871 Act in accordance with the wishes of the subscribers or donors. In accordance with general trust law, funds received for specific purposes will be accounted for separately from the generality of the organisation's funds.

### **The Friends Committee**

For the purposes of managing the Friends of WPCC, a Friends of WPCC Committee has been established as a standing committee of the Board. The Friends' Committee is responsible for organising and leading both the fundraising and annual programme of events. (For avoidance of doubt, this does not include the annual programme of events that are led and managed by staff, though co-ordination with these events is critical.) The annual budget for the work led by the Friends Committee is subject to Board approval as part of the annual budget process. This budget will need to include the calendar of the major activities that are planned and the financial implications of each one.

The Friends Committee has no budget or authority to spend WPCC resources unless agreed by the Chief Executive under the terms of WPCC's Financial Regulations and Delegations.

The Friends of WPCC Committee will prepare progress reports to the Board at regular intervals. These reports should include details of:

- events and activities planned;
- events and activities held and funds/costs committed/raised/expended per event/activity;
- membership numbers;
- overall funds raised and comparison to budget.

## **Membership**

The membership of the Committee shall comprise the following:

- A Conservator who shall be Chairman;
- At least one other Conservator;
- Executive Assistant to Chief Executive;
- Chief Executive;
- Deputy Clerk and Ranger (as needed);
- Fundraising Manager;
- An Honorary Secretary (co-opted)
- Up to six external, co-opted members who have local knowledge and interest in the work of the Friends of WPC

The Conservators and external members of the Friends Committee will be approved by the Board for a period of up to three years, extendable by no more than two additional three-year periods. The Chairman of the Friends Committee ('the Chairman') will be nominated by the Friends Committee and approved by the Board on an annual basis. A quorum shall consist of two members, each of whom is a Conservator.

Recommendations to the Board of Conservators for decision, where appropriate, will be made on the basis of the majority votes of the Conservator members of the Committee present and in the case of an equal division of votes, the Chairman shall have a second/casting vote.

## **Meetings**

It is proposed that the Friends Committee will meet on a quarterly basis. These meetings may be supplemented by additional planning meetings as necessary to plan for special events.

The agenda for each meeting shall be prepared by the Chairman. Minutes, including action notes and recommendations of each meeting, will be prepared by the Honorary Secretary and will be received by the Board as part of the Board's regular agenda.

<b>(Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators Meeting	3 June 2024	06.24.5
<b>Subject:</b> Matters Arising from the Public Board meeting of 8 April 2024		<b>Private</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons		<b>For Information</b>
<h2>Matters Arising</h2>		
Matters arising from the meeting held on 8 April 2024 that are not covered on the Agenda.		

#### **04.23.5 Board Meeting Dates**

*With regard to dates, it was noted that the meeting date of 8 July would need to be changed as it left a gap of more than three months to the October meeting. AEH would contact Conservators to arrange an alternative date.*

**Completed. Meeting now arranged for 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2024**

#### **Calendar**

*The calendar of dates was noted. The EA to CE would circulate a larger version of the calendar.*

**Hard copies of the updated calendar will be provided at the meeting if required.**

#### **04.24.8 Chief Executive's Report**

*The Chairman asked that the Board's thanks to the REMPF Groundsmen and the Maintenance team be recorded. The work involved to get the pitches fit for play was remarkable and the Board were very appreciative of their efforts. The Chairman had attended the event and several of the coaches and parents had praised those efforts.*

**Done and appreciated by the staff concerned.**

#### **Fundraising**

*In response to a question from the Chairman, the FM confirmed that the charity had received funding from South Western Rail for the restoration of the path at Beverley Brook. Further funding might be available and this would be monitored.*

#### **Ongoing**

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Board of Conservators	3 June 2024	06.24.6
<b>Subject:</b> Chief Executive's Report	<b>Public</b>	
<b>Report of:</b> Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons	<b>For Decision and Information</b>	
<h1>SUMMARY</h1>		
<b>Draft Recommendation:</b>		
That the Board receive and note the report.		

## Keepers' Update

April was another busy month for the Keepers, marked by several significant activities and incidents.

Staffing - Currently, the Keepers are operating with a team of four rather than their usual six. A replacement for one of the positions will start on 8th July, and we will be conducting interviews soon to fill the second position.

Visitor Numbers and Campaigns - With the improving weather, there has been an increase in visitor numbers. The Keepers ran a successful cycling campaign over the course of a weekend, during which they stopped and advised over 50 cyclists. The biggest issue was cyclists following Google Maps. Work needs to be undertaken to correct the base maps that Google use and this is something that will be picked up later in the year.

### Incidents and Responses:

- Dog Attack: One of the Green Keepers was attacked by a young Ridgeback. The dog's owner was located and advised to keep the dog on a lead while on the Common.
- Medical Emergency: The Keepers and other staff provided medical assistance to a member of the public who had taken an overdose.
- Rescue Operation: Keepers assisted the London Fire Brigade with logistical support during a rescue operation for a member of public who had become stuck in Beverley Brook whilst rescuing his dog.
- Fire Preparedness: With the season's first BBQ taking place, we have stationed the water bowser at the Ranger's Office to handle small fires before the London Fire Brigade arrives.
- Horse Welfare: All our horses are in good health. We have initiated a summer break rota for them, ensuring they each get a month at grass in Surrey during the summer.
- Community Engagement: We facilitated two public engagement visits this month, hosting a local nursery and a school.
- Golf Course Monitoring: In the evenings, we are targeting the golf course to check green fees and ensure compliance with club rules and Commons byelaws.



## **Maintenance Update**

General site management - The Maintenance Team have initiated early season mapping, measuring, and inspections of Japanese knotweed. They began sensitive spring and summer mowing and strimming to ensure safe access, clear sightlines, and maintain fire breaks and pathways and the amenity sites. Maintenance included strimming around bins, benches, posts, newly planted trees, and memorials. They also opened ditch lines to reduce flooding on the Plain and maintained drainage routes. Preparation for events included mowing the main showground at PLC. Tree maintenance involved lifting low branches for better visibility, controlling sucker growth, and managing ivy as part of pre-tree safety inspections. The team also continued their ongoing management of Himalayan Balsam along Beverley Brook through pulling techniques.

Tree Safety and Habitat Management - Following several periods of high wind, the team conducted tree safety inspections across the Commons. They lifted tree branches and mowed brambles on the golf fairway, reduced stumps after clearing sessions, and created dead hedges and boundaries at various locations. They installed extra bird boxes at habitat restoration sites and performed tree safety work, both reactive and planned, across multiple locations such as Ladies Mile, Roehampton Church Meadow, and other key areas. This work was conducted by both professional contractors and internal staff.

Additional Tasks - The team conducted inspections and temporary repairs to the Windmill after high winds, addressed playground flooding at Roehampton Church School by excavating and jetting old drains, and supervised volunteer groups for litter picking on Putney Heath and Beverley Brook. They completed LOLER inspections and an annual audit of climbing equipment, demonstrated electric ATVs, and conducted PAT testing for all WPCCC sites.

The team also aided in a medical emergency 'Code Red' situation, and assisted in several medical emergencies during a running event. The team helped contractors with three large gas leaks, cleared fly-tipped items including large cannabis farm waste, and conducted large-scale cleanups in specific areas. They serviced the water bowser so it is ready to deal with fires, installed fixed photo posts at pond locations, and managed staff reassignments, integrating new skills into the team. Additionally, they supplied logs and timber for community projects and provided waste manure and composted woodchip to local community gardeners

## **Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields Update**

Weather and Initial Tasks - April began similarly to March with heavy rain, necessitating the pumping of water from two chambers. Routine tasks included the daily cutting, slitting, and marking of the football and rugby pitches, as well as regular litter picking and bin management.

Maintenance and Services - On April 3rd, Slaters arrived for their annual service work on the Astro wickets, practice wickets, and long jump run-up. These areas were cleaned and treated, although a return visit was required due to ineffective results caused by prior rainfall.

Events and Activities - The Surrey League Cup Final was hosted on April 6th on Old Thorntonians' first team pitch, benefiting from favorable weather. The event saw a high turnout, with the car park reaching full capacity.

Infrastructure Improvements - Fence replacement work began around the Pavilion's rear and car park side, taking approximately eight days. The new fence, featuring concrete plinths and posts, improved both security and aesthetics.

Cricket Preparation - From April 8th to 12th, Timber Nook was on-site daily. Preparation of cricket areas for Thomas Schools involved setting boundaries and preparing two areas for Flicx wickets. Cricket nets were set up by April 18th in anticipation of Thomas Schools' return.

Medical Incident - On April 20th, a player suffered a cardiac arrest during a match. The Pavilion's defibrillator was used, saving the player's life with the assistance of a doctor from another match. The player has since made a full recovery.

Football Season and Events - Football teams are catching up on matches lost to weather disruptions, with increased usage expected until May 19th. Old Thorntonians held their annual awards day on May 18th, enjoying successful weather and attendance.

Ongoing Activities - Roehampton Cricket Club resumed using the Astro wickets on Sunday mornings throughout the cricket season. Run Through hosted a 10K and Half Marathon, with some runners requiring medical assistance due to dehydration.

Compliance and Safety - PAT testing was conducted in the Pavilion, club house, and TH&H to ensure electrical safety compliance.

## **General**

### **Staff changes**

A member of the Maintenance Team Sarah Murton has been successful in her application to fill a newly-created role within the Conservation department. The new role, Conservation Ranger, reports directly to the Conservation and Engagement Officer, and will be assisting in a wide range of conservation activities, namely to help delivery our ambitious Land Management Plan, including volunteer engagement, monitoring the indicator species as a proxy for the condition of key habitat types and habitat mapping.

## **Community Engagement and Events**

### **Bird Reports**

Adrian Podmore, the volunteer who took over the lead for bird monitoring on the Commons from Dave Wills, has decided to stand down after eight years. Adrian's contribution has been considerable, not only in visiting regularly to monitor the birdlife on the Commons but leading bird walks and producing the annual Bird Report – a really valuable document in helping us track what's happening here. Our thanks go out to Adrian for all his work.

The role has been taken up by Les Evans-Hill, who is well known to the charity. Les has helped Adrian with the regular bird walks, manages the Commons' bird transect data and has also run our annual Birdsong Workshop for several years. Les is an experienced entomologist and also records many other taxa groups on the Commons, in particular moths, and helps out with our annual Weekend of Nature. Les works for Butterfly Conservation and manages the Butterflies for the New Millennium and National Moth Recording Schemes.

Les will continue the tradition of sending out regular updates and hopes to expand it to include information on other flora and fauna on the Commons. In order to better manage the mailing list, and to ensure we are GDPR compliant, the updates will be sent out via the

WPCC mailing software that is part of the website. You can sign up on our website:  
[www.wpcc.org.uk/NNN](http://www.wpcc.org.uk/NNN)

Many visitors send in sightings and they can continue to do this via e-mail  
[wildlife@wpcc.org.uk](mailto:wildlife@wpcc.org.uk) – we have also created an online form on the website.

**Birdsong Course** – a successful Birdsong Course was held in the Information Centre on Saturday 27 April 2024, followed by a walk on Sunday 28 April. Ten people attended.

**Birdsong Walk** – a Birdsong walk was held on Sunday 12 May 2024. Around 15 people attended and highlights included Garden and Willow Warblers on the Heath.

### **Future Events**

**Weekend of Nature** – The annual Weekend of Nature will be held on 21 to 23 June 2023. The schedule of events is as follows:

#### **Friday 21 June**

6.30pm Small Mammal Trapping

#### **Saturday 22 June**

6.30am Small Mammal Trapping

2.00pm Saturday 22 June Butterfly/Dragonfly/Pond Sampling Walk

9.30pm Saturday 22 June Bat Walk and Moth Evening

#### **Sunday 23 June**

8.00am Bird Walk

10.30am Opening the Moth Trap

11.30am General nature/conservation walk

### **Annual Open Meeting**

The Conservators' Annual Open Meeting will take place on Monday 24 June 2024 at St Paul's Church, Augustus Road, London SW19 6EW. The meeting will start at 8pm but Conservators and staff will be available from 7.30pm for informal conversation.

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Board of Conservators	3 June 2024	06.24.7
<b>Subject:</b> Conservation Update		<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Conservation and Engagement Officer		<b>For Information</b>

## Summary

This report provides a summary of Conservation activity during April and May 2024.

### Heathland Management

Over the past two months, heathland management on the Commons has been focused on the cutting back of scrub (otherwise known as scrub bashing) on three separate areas and stump grinding on four separate areas.

Scrub bashing:



*Area 1: During April & May 2025, 4 volunteer scrub bashing sessions have been held on heathland located between Ladies Mile and Roehampton Ride.*





*Area 2: During April and May 2024, 2 volunteer sessions helped tackle scrub encroachment on heathland between Kingsmere and Tibbet's Meadow.*



*Area 3: During May 2024, 1 volunteer group helped tackle scrub encroachment on heathland near to the KRR Stone*

**Stump Grinding on the Commons' heathland.**

Starting on Monday 3 June 2024, stump grinding work commenced for one week on various sections of the Commons' heathland.

Linked in with the need to reduce the coverage of invasive trees on the Commons' heathland, each year selected tree stumps that have resulted from the previous winter work programme are removed by the Commons' Maintenance Team. This work is carried out to



reduce the amount of regrowth on the heathland and to reduce additional hazards that could damage vehicles and machinery in the future.



*Photographs for this year's work are not available. The photograph above shows similar work that was previously carried out on heathland near Bluegate Gravel Pit.*

As with so many areas of our work on the Commons, a balance needs to be achieved that will be of benefit to wildlife whilst also helping us ensure that each habitat can be suitably managed in the future. Rather than simply being viewed as the useless remnants of a tree, a tree stump is regarded as an important micro-ecosystem. If left to decay naturally, a large tree stump can provide shelter and a source of food for a variety of wildlife including plants, invertebrates, reptiles and mammals. For this reason, whenever a programme of stump grinding is carried out on the Commons, we make sure that many of the largest stumps remain on site where they will provide a useful additional component to the ecology of the site.

### **The Beverley Brook**

Over the past two months, the following activities have been carried out along the Wimbledon Common section of the Beverley Brook.

- Volunteer litter picking sessions (held every three weeks)
- Volunteer Himalayan balsam pulling sessions (x2)
- Staff Himalayan balsam pulling sessions (x 3)
- Reduction of shade bearing trees and branches along the edge of the Beverley Brook.

Volunteer litter picking along the Wimbledon Common section of the Beverley Brook:



*Held every three weeks, WPCC volunteers help to ensure that litter is regularly removed from the Wimbledon Common section of the Beverley Brook.*

Himalayan balsam pulling:

Himalayan balsam is an invasive non-native species which is now widespread in the UK, especially along urban rivers, where it spreads solely by seeds, which are small and easily carried by wind or water. Himalayan balsam out-competes native species in ecologically sensitive areas, particularly riverbanks, where it grows in dense stands. It can impede flow at times of high rainfall, increasing the likelihood of flooding.

Whilst Himalayan Balsam is an annual plant, its high level of seed production and vigorous seed dispersal means that it is highly invasive. Each plant produces at least 500 seeds, which can be propelled up to 7 metres from the parent plant by seed pods that are explosive to touch.

Control of this species should generally be carried out before flowering and it is especially important to carry out any management before seeding. Whilst labour intensive, if done in the correct manner hand pulling can be a very effective strategy at controlling the spread of this plant species.





*Himalayan balsam located close along the edge of the Beverley Brook.*

#### **Reducing shade along the Beverley Brook:**

During May 2024, WPCC staff were involved in back small diameter trees that were casting shade into the Beverley Brook. Most of the small trees were sycamore although some other trees were included in the programme of removal. Where light can reach the river and the bankside, the conditions for both instream and bankside vegetation to flourish are provided.



*Male fern: photographed close to Mill Corner on Wimbledon Common*



## **Pond Management**

During the middle of April 2024, a team from A.G.A Group (Fisheries Management) removed carp from Scio Pond and Kingsmere. This work was provided free of charge and used as a staff training event for the A.G.A team.

Approximately 70 1-3 year old carp and four large carp were removed from Scio Pond. The team were less successful at Kingsmere although it was acknowledged that some carp remain in this pond. Carp are a non-native species which cause immense damage to vegetation, invertebrates and amphibians. For this reason, carp should not be in any of the Commons' ponds. In addition to this, ponds such as Scio Pond have become overstocked with fish which has resulted in the appearance of fish gasping for air during the hot summer months when oxygen levels are depleted. Removing the carp from Scio Pond, in particular, has therefore helped to improve the biodiversity of the pond and deal with a welfare concern.



*The team from A.G.A fishing at Scio Pond during May 2024*

## **Stag Bog**

During May 2022, two volunteer sessions have been held at Stag Bog. These sessions have focused on bracken pulling and the cutting back of bramble. A thorough check was made by the volunteer team leader prior to both events to ensure that no disturbance would be caused to nesting birds.





*Stag Bog photographed on 22 May 2024*

## **Public Engagement Events**

To help visitors to learn more about the work that is carried out to conserve and enhance Wimbledon and Putney Commons, throughout the year, we provide a series of walk and talks.

Over the past two months, the following public engagement events have been provided on the Commons:

April 2024

- 02.04.24 - PH leading regular healthy walk programme on the Commons
- 10 April – Roehampton Base Youth Group – visit to the stables and the windmill and a scrub bashing session on Putney Heath.
- 18.04.24 – PH & MM leading a heathland walk for The Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons (x20)
- 20.04.24 – PH & MM leading a 1-hour heathland-based walk for the Wimbledon Walk and Talk Movement. (x60)
- 22.04.24 – PH helping with the Roehampton Walking Group
- 23.04.24 – PH leading regular healthy walk programme on the Commons.
- 27.04.24 – Les Evans-Hill leading bird walk for the Fiends of WPCCC.
- 27.04.24 & 28.04.24 – Les Evans-Hill – bird song course.

## May 2024

- 01.04.24 – Stables visit by Wimbledon High School (50 pupils and teachers)
- 07.05.24 – 2-hour spring walk for the Healthy Walk programme
- 09.05.24 – Ursuline Prep School visit to the stables and Queensmere
- 12.05.24 – Spring bird walk (open to all) led by Les Evans-Hill and Adrian Podmore
- 14.05.24 – PH/SM leading regular healthy walk programme on the Commons.
- 23.05.24 – SM short talk to pupils from Dundonald Primary School about the effects of litter and pollution on wildlife.
- 24.05.24 - SM short talk to pupils from Dundonald Primary School about the effects of litter and pollution on wildlife.

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date(s):</b>	<b>Item no.</b>
Board of Conservators	3 June 2024	06.24.8
<b>Subject:</b> Fundraising Update		<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Chief Executive		<b>For Information</b>
<h2>Summary</h2>		
This report provides a summary of fundraising activity in late April and May 2024.		

### Fundraising Manager

We are delighted to advise that our Fundraising Manager, Maggie, gave birth to a healthy baby girl in May. Our congratulations to Maggie and her family on their new arrival.

Maggie will be on maternity leave for 12 months and WPCC have taken on a new member of staff to cover her absence, Lynn Farrant. Lynn worked a number of days in May and started full time at the end of May.

### Rewilding Queensmere

Following WPCC being awarded £130,000 from the Mayor of London's *Rewild London Fund* to take forward a transformative project to rewild Queensmere pond, we are about to go out to tender to get at least three quotes. One of the companies we will approach will be the AGA Group, who did the feasibility study and provided the tender brief.

### The Big Give

WPCC took part in this year's Green Match Fund, a match funding campaign run by the Big Give between 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> April 2024. Our fundraising target was to raise £5,000, with all donations made via our campaign page being doubled to £10,000.

Advertising for donations began on Friday 19 April with posters on the Commons' noticeboards. A guided walk around Putney Heath led by the Conservation and Engagement Officer and the Fundraising Manager was held for the Friends and both also led a Wimbledon Village Walk and Talk to explain what was proposed and to encourage donations.

We are delighted to say the funds were raised in just a day and a half (by midday on Saturday).

This, along with the feedback from Benefactors at the Benefactors Reception, my knowledge of the Commons and wider fundraising experience, does give me confidence in our fundraising offer and peoples willingness to donate to the Commons.

# Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting dated 11 March 2024

## Meeting Minutes

### Attendees

Oliver Bennett - conservator (OB)  
Sue Bucknall – conservator (SB)  
Colin Cooper – staff (CC)  
Andy Davies – volunteer (AD)  
Angela Evans-Hill – staff (AEH)  
Les Evans-Hill - volunteer (LEH)  
Peter Haldane – staff (PH)  
Andrew Harding – volunteer (AH)  
Michael Johnston – conservator (MJ)  
Maggie May – staff (MM)  
Simon Riley - volunteer (SR)  
John Weir – volunteer (JW)

The first part of the meeting was a walk to Queensmere and environs to discuss restoration opportunities following funding being made available by the Mayor of London's 2022 Rewild London Fund. MM led the walk and explained that it was hoped that the restoration would include upstream resilience to reduce sediment and nutrient flows into the lake, a new reed bed at the head of the pond as well as bank side enhancements using coir rolls backfilled with dredged sediment to create areas of emergent vegetation along the lake edge.

1. Apologies were received from Ros Taylor, Adrian Podmore and Henry Wilson.
2. The minutes of the Forum meeting of 9 January 2024 were agreed.
3. Action points from previous meeting.
  - a) PH to circulate amendments made to Land Management Plan (LMP) by Conservators prior to approval. **Action point – PH to circulate.**
  - b) PH to circulate Queensmere restoration report. It was noted that this is actually being revised and will be made available when complete.
4. Fundraising update – see above re Queensmere. Wimbledon Common is included in the Big Give week of 18-24 April which gives an opportunity for donations to be doubled. A few events are planned where donations will be requested.
5. Conservation update – PH circulated his report prior to the meeting. One of the newer actions has been the widening of the golf course rough in a few areas. The areas of rough have gradually diminished over the years through scrub and bramble encroachment. This might have additional benefits – including a decrease in erosion and compaction by walkers in these areas as

footfall would be spread more evenly. PH's report also mentioned that he had walked the Commons with representatives from Natural England to discuss the LMP. NE were pleased with the plan and the proposals contained therein.

## 6. Recorder and monitoring updates.

AP circulated a recent bird sightings report to the group prior to the meeting. LEH had also provided a schedule of moth species seen so far this year. LEH added that moth wise there was nothing exceptional to report although general abundance had been encouraging.

OB mentioned that he had recently surveyed Veilwort (a rare liverwort that is a London priority species under the London Biodiversity Action Plan) found, in London, only at Farm Bog on Wimbledon Common as well as Richmond Park (although it is thought it may have become extinct in Richmond Park in the recent past). OB had concluded that the Veilwort was occurring at Farm Bog in atypical habitat that might be worth documenting.

OB also reminded forum members that he had asked that all recorders provide the information for the 2023 Monitoring Report by the end of the month. OB also suggested that further consideration was given to how we could get additional media interest on publication.

CC mentioned that he had included the employment of an ecologist in the recent business plan. An ecologist could, amongst other things, help monitor each habitat under the LMP. AH suggested that a full baseline survey was needed to measure the progress of the implementation of the LMP, CC felt that it was very unlikely that a baseline survey could be done for the whole Common. OB mentioned that funders were increasingly asking for baseline data. SR noted that we could potentially use indicator species as a good proxy for this and that for priority habitats these would most likely be readily available. It was also mentioned that the JNCC had developed a rapid assessment model for certain habitats that we might be able to use.

## 7. Future events – the Forum discussed the Weekend of Nature. The dates of Friday 21 to 23 June 2024 were confirmed. Thought was given as to how to encourage more participation particularly from children. AEH thought that more stalls with some interesting insects/spiders/snakes (for example) on display might help. Although it was felt basing the event at the visitors' centre was the most practical it was thought that there could be more advertising/signage especially given the numbers of people who pass through the Windmill car park area who may be unaware of the event. CC mentioned that we ought to be considering how we might measure the success of the Weekend of Nature – intangibles such as education/awareness of issues/responsible use or donations which are more measurable. AEH agreed to correspond with forum members and other participants to ensure that the weekend runs smoothly.



## 8. AOB

- a) CC mentioned that he wished to change the make-up and constitution of the Forum as he felt that there were conflicts around reporting lines. This might involve the setting-up of a sub-committee of the main Board of Conservators. CC agreed to circulate a brief explanation to the Forum members to explain his concerns and his proposals for the future. **Action Point – CC to circulate a note on his proposals.**
- b) AH asked what the status was on the correspondence with LWT re Farm Bog. CC confirmed that this was on his to-do list. **Action point – CC to write to LWT.**
- c) SR asked about Greenspace Information for Greater London (GIGL) membership. CC confirmed that it was his intention that the Commons joined GIGL or an equivalent.
- d) Date of next meeting 14 May 2024

## Future Dates

### Forum meetings

14 May 2024  
16 July 2024  
3 September 2024  
12 November 2024

### Other

Bird Song Course – 27/28 April 2024  
Birdsong Walk – 19 May 2024  
Weekend of Nature – 21/23 June 2024  
Butterfly & dragonfly walk – July/August 2024 - TBC  
Open Day – 8 September 2024  
Bird Walk – 15 September 2024

## **Projects/Ideas Listing**

Purchase of bug traps for purpose of more extensive invertebrate surveys

Possibility of live camera feed on active swallow nests

Consideration of invasive non-native species, including mapping

Work to update and combine flora datasets

Surveys of saproxylic invertebrate fauna

Spring/Summer walks for Board

Monitoring/mapping of veteran trees