



CONSERVATORS' PUBLIC MEETING
to be held on
Monday 22 July 2024 at 4.30pm
in the Information Centre, Ranger's Office,
Manor Cottage, London SW19 5NR

AGENDA

PART A(1) PUBLIC

- 07.24.1 Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence**
- 07.24.2 Declarations of Personal or Prejudicial Interests Respect of Items to be Considered in this Part of the Meeting**
- 07.23.3 WPCC Board Meetings**
- i. Resolutions of the Board Meeting 3 June 2024 **Page 1**
 - ii. Minutes of the Part A(1) Board Meeting of 3 June 2024 **Page 3**
- 07.24.4 Matters Arising** **Page 9**
- 07.23.5 Board and Committee Matters** **Page 10**
- i. Chair of Constitution Committee and Audit and Risk Committee
 - ii. Calendar of Meetings for 2025
- 07.24.6 Chief Executive's Report** **Page 13**
- 07.24.7 Conservation Update** **Page 16**
- 07.24.8 Fundraising Update** **Page 27**
- 07.24.9 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report** **Verbal**
- 07.24.10 WPCC Forum/Group Meetings**
- Wildlife and Conservation
- i. To note the minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum held on 7 May 2024. **Page 28**
 - ii. To receive and note the Draft 2023 Annual Monitoring Report (uploaded separately)
 - iii. Approve a Media Release to accompany publication **Page 32**
- 07.24.11 Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A(1) of this Meeting**
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CONSERVATORS' CONFIDENTIAL MEETING
to be held on Monday 22 July 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.

07.24.12 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

07.24.13 WPCB Board Meetings

- i. Minutes of the Confidential Board meeting held on 3 June 2024

07.24.14 Matters Arising

07.24.15 Board, Committee and Forum Matters

- i. Approval of the revised Board Terms of Reference
- ii. Committee Co-optees
- iii. Receive the minutes of the:
 - a. Stakeholder meeting of March 2024
 - b. FIC meeting of 7 and 25 May 2024
 - c. ARC meeting of 17 June 2024
- iv. Consideration of the creation of an Environment Committee

07.24.16 Chief Executive's Report – Confidential

07.24.17 Fundraising Update

07.24.18 Dedications and Memorials Policy

07.24.19 Licences and Leases

07.24.20 Financial

- i. Management Report and Accounts May 2024
- ii. Management Report and Accounts June 2024

07.24.21 Constitutional Matters

07.24.22 Top Ten Risks

07.24.23 Items for Inclusion in a Media Release by the Board

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07.24.25 Items for Future Consideration



Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Resolution agreed at the Board Meeting held on Monday 3 June 2024

Part A1 Public

06.24.4

Resolution

1. The Board approved the appointment of David Brown as Chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee and Sue Bucknall as Chairman of the Friends Committee.
2. The Board approve the Terms of Reference for the Friends Committee.

Part A2 Confidential

06.24.15

Resolution

The Board approved the appointment of co-optees to the Friends and Audit and Risk Committees as follows:

- Friends – Belinda Leathes
- Audit and Risk – Sarah Wilton

06.24.17

Resolution

The Board RESOLVED to approve:

- the draft Annual Report and Audited Accounts 2023/24 as recommended by the Audit and Risk and Finance and Investment Committees, to be formally signed by the Chairman and auditor at the June 2024 Annual Open Meeting;
- the WPC Key Audit Findings prepared independently by Kreston Reeves for the audited accounts for the year ending the 31 March 2024;
- the draft Letter of Representation to be signed by the Chairman of the Board and also by the Chief Executive after the formal accounts have been signed at the Annual Open Meeting.

Present

Conservators: Mauro Mattiuzzo (MM)
Oliver Bennett (OB)
Mr David Brown (DB)
Sue Bucknall (SB)
Michael Johnston (MJ)
Mr William Liu (WL)
Peter Shortt (PS)

Officers: Colin Cooper, Chief Executive (CE)
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive and Communications Officer
Lynnie Farrant, Fundraising Manager
Philip Warner, Management Accountant

Apologies: Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk and Ranger
Peter Haldane, Conservation and Engagement Officer (C&EO)

**Draft Public Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on
Monday 3 June 2024 at 4.30pm at the Information Centre, Manor Cottage,
London SW19 5NR**

Conservators: Mauro Mattiuzzo (MM)
Oliver Bennett (OB)
David Brown
Sue Bucknall (SB)
Michael Johnston (MJ)
William Liu (WL)
Peter Shortt (PS)

Officers: Colin Cooper, Chief Executive (CE)
Angela Evans-Hill, EA to Chief Executive/Communications
Officer (EA to CE/CO)
Lynnie Farrant, Fundraising Manager (FM)
Philip Warner (MA)

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

PART A(1) PUBLIC

06.24.1 Confirmation of Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Paula Graystone, Deputy Clerk & Ranger

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

The CE advised he was a member of the Wimbledon Society and Putney Society.
Furthermore, his cohabiting partner is a member of staff at Kings College
School (non managerial).

The EA to the CE/CO advised she was a member of the Putney Society.

06.23.3 WPCC Board Meetings

The Resolutions and the Minutes of the public Board Meeting held on 8 April 2024 were approved.

The EA to the Chief Executive/CO was asked to send calendar invites for the remaining Board meetings this year.

ACTION: EA to Chief Executive/CO

06.23.4 Committee Matters

The Board received and noted the Chairman's report

The Board approved the appointment of David Brown as Chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee and Sue Bucknall as Chairman of the Friends Committee.

The Board approved the updated Terms of Reference for the Friends Committee.

Resolution

1. The Board approved the appointment of David Brown as Chairman of the Finance and Investment Committee and Sue Bucknall as Chairman of the Friends Committee.
2. The Board approved the Terms of Reference for the Friends Committee.

06.24.5 Matters Arising

The Board received and noted the Matters Arising Report.

06.24.6 Chief Executive's Report

The Board received and noted the Chief Executive's report.

The following points were noted:

Keepers – The team was still working with only four Keepers which was making adhering to minimal operational standards difficult. The Keepers were working a lot of overtime in an effort to maintain these standards.

The Commons had been busy with visitors given the warmer weather. There had been particular focus on stopping cyclists who were on non-cycling tracks and explaining to them that Google Maps directions were incorrect. Other incidents include:

- Dog Attack: One of the Green Keepers was attacked by a young Ridgeback and the same dog also bothered people attending a staff-led walk. 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 been taken ill on the Commons.
- 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, the water bowser had been stationed at the Ranger's Office to handle small fires before the London Fire Brigade arrive.
- Horse Welfare: All the horses were in good health and their summer break rota was underway, ensuring they each get a month at grass in Surrey during the summer.
- Community Engagement: The Keepers had facilitated two public engagement visits this month, hosting a local nursery and a school.
- Golf Course Monitoring: In the evenings, the Keepers were targeting the golf course to check green fees and ensure compliance with club rules and Commons' byelaws.

The CE added that it was hoped to set up a dog-related group to enable communications with all dog-walkers, private and commercial.

Maintenance - The Maintenance Team have initiated early season mapping, measuring, and inspections of Japanese knotweed. They had begun sensitive spring and summer mowing and strimming to ensure safe access, clear sightlines, maintain fire breaks and pathways, and the amenity sites. They had also opened ditch lines to reduce flooding on the Plain and maintained drainage routes. Preparation had been taken 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.

Tree Safety and Habitat Management - Following several periods of high wind, the team conducted tree safety inspections across the Commons, lifted tree branches and mowed brambles on the golf fairway, reduced stumps after clearing sessions, and created dead hedges and boundaries at various locations. Extra bird boxes had been installed at habitat restoration sites and performed tree safety work, both reactive and planned, across multiple locations.

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.

REMPF – With the recent heavy rains, the team at the Playing Fields had been regularly pumping water from the two underground chambers where it drained into from the pitches, often around 7,000 litres in an hour. A future project might involve utilising this water to create a habitat at the edge of the Playing Fields, which would also help keep the pitches drained.

The Surrey League Cup Final was hosted on April 6th on Old Thorntonians' first team pitch. A popular event there was a high turnout, with the car park reaching full capacity. The Chairman asked if the Old Thorntonians had been paid to host the match. The CE thought they were in the final but he would confirm that.

DB asked about two pitches that had been cordoned off during the Rugby 7s as he had been advised that one of the schools had exclusive use of them. The CE advised that the school needed to use the pitches fairly soon after the tournament and there was not enough time to manage repairs for the school to use them.

On 20 April, 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, proving the usefulness of having several across the site. All the defibs are regularly checked to ensure they remain useable.

Staff Changes - A member of the Maintenance Team Sarah Murton had 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 assist 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.

Bird Reports - Adrian Podmore, the volunteer who took over the lead for bird monitoring on the Commons from Dave Wills, had decided to stand down after eight years. Adrian's contribution had been considerable, not only in visiting regularly to monitor the birdlife on the Commons but leading bird walks and producing the annual Bird Report. The EA to the CE was drafting a thank you letter for OB to send. The role has been taken up by Les Evans-Hill, an experienced entomologist who is well known to the charity. The opportunity has been taken to bring the bi-monthly newsletter in house to help with GDPR and data protection.

Future Events – the annual Weekend of Nature would be taking place on the weekend of 21–23 June 2024. OB mentioned that the general nature walk on the Sunday had been re-named “Nature Safari” and it was hoped to attract more children along.

Annual Open Meeting - The Conservators' Annual Open Meeting would take place on Monday 24 June 2024 at St Paul's Church, Augustus Road, London SW19 6EW. The

meeting would start at 8pm but Conservators and staff were asked to be available from 7.30pm for informal conversation with those attending.

06.24.7 Conservation Update

The Board received and noted the Conservation and Engagement Officer's report.

Heathland Management - Over the past two months, heathland management on the Commons has been focused on the cutting back of scrub (scrub bashing) on three separate areas and a stump grinder had been hired for a week and had been used in four separate areas. Removal of the stumps ensured that the trees did not grow back in future years. During the work, it had been noted that the Kestrel nesting box near Kingsmere was in use by a breeding pair.

Beverley Brook – Activities in the Brook around recent weeks had included litter picking, reduction of shade-bearing trees and pulling of Himalayan Balsam by both staff and volunteers. The CE reported that the amount of Balsam this year had been significantly higher than in previous years and he suspected a problem further upstream. He had initiated a conversation with the Beverley Brook Catchment Partnership to try and identify where the problem might be and perhaps a combined effort could be made to clear it along the Brook.

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. 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 helped to improve the biodiversity of the pond and deal with a welfare concern.

Stag Bog - Two volunteer sessions have been held at Stag Bog, both of which focused on bracken pulling and the cutting back of bramble.

In addition, some 16 public engagement activities had been carried out, including bird walks, healthy walks and school visits. Roehampton Base Youth Group had also visited the Commons again with a visit to the stables and the windmill and a scrub bashing session on Putney Heath.

OB reminded the Board that there did need to be an agreement on an approach to how the Board oversaw the implementation of the Land Management Plan. Governance changes were proposed to implement this and it was hoped that a paper would be put to the July meeting.

ACTION: Chief Executive

06.24.8 Fundraising Update

The Board received and noted the Chief Executive's report.

The CE reported that MM had gone on maternity leave in May and had given birth to a healthy baby girl just a week later. The Board asked for their congratulations to be passed on to MM and her family. She planned to take 12 months maternity leave.

Lynn Farrant had joined the staff to cover MM's maternity leave and had started in late 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, the CE was working on the tender documents. Quotes would be required from at least three contractors.

The Fixed-Point Photography Posts were in the process of being installed. These would hopefully engage the public in a citizen science project which would help staff monitor the changes in the ponds over the course of a year.

The Big Give – The CE reported that WPCC had taken part in this year's Green Match Fund, a match funding campaign run by the Big Give between 18 and 25 April 2024. The target was to raise £5,000, with all donations made via the campaign page being doubled to £10,000.

Advertising for donations began on Thursday 18 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. Staff were delighted when the funds were raised to say the funds were raised in just a day and a half (by midday on Saturday).

The CE commented that the response, and feedback from the recent reception for benefactors had given confidence in WPCC's fundraising offer and peoples willingness to donate to the Commons.

06.24.9 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report

SB gave a verbal update on the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons.

A series of six walks per year were being organised for the Friends. The walks were important for meeting one of the Friends' aims of community engagement and the educational aspect to the walks – giving information about the work carried out, did lead to a better understanding of how the Commons are managed and, in turn, further donations. A further walk had been held, led by Asif Malik, exploring the architecture and artifacts around the Commons.

An ambitious fundraising target had been set for 2024/25 and it was hoped to achieve this by means of increased membership, more publicity and fundraising events. The Friends Committee was currently planning a summer social event to be held in July. This would be an afternoon tea, held in the Ranger's Office complex and would give attendees the opportunity to meet the new Conservators and senior staff.

DB commented that many people he spoke to locally were not aware of the Friends and suggested a campaign through the local Residents' Associations, perhaps via their annual newsletters. The Chairman also suggested an occasional stall at the Village Farmer's Market. This was agreed.

The Walk and Talk walk on 6 June would be undertaking a litter pick on the Commons as part of the Big Help Out weekend. SB would also be asking those attending to think about becoming a volunteer on the Commons.

Action – Friends Committee

06.24.10 WPCC Forum/Group Meetings

The Board received and noted the minutes of the Wildlife and Conservation Forum held on 11 March 2024.

OB commented that the annual monitoring report had been completed and the EA to the CE would be preparing a media release for the Board's consideration at the July Board meeting. A copy of the report would be made available for the Conservators to read.

ACTION: EA to CE

06.24.11 Public Questions on Matters Considered in Part A (1) of this Meeting

There were no questions.

The meeting finished at 5.30pm.

(Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators Meeting	22 July 2024	07.24.5
Subject: Matters Arising from the Public Board meeting of 8 April 2024		Private
Report of: Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons		For Information
Matters Arising		
Matters arising from the meeting held on 3 June 2024 that are not covered on the Agenda.		

06.23.3 WPCC Board Meetings

The EA to the Chief Executive/CO was asked to send calendar invites for the remaining Board meetings this year.

Completed

06.24.9 Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons Report

DB commented that many people he spoke to locally were not aware of the Friends and suggested a campaign through the local Residents' Associations, perhaps via their annual newsletters. The Chairman also suggested an occasional stall at the Village Farmer's Market. This was agreed.

Ongoing

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators	22 July 2024	07.24.5
Subject: Committee Matters	Public	
Report of: Chairman of Wimbledon and Putney Commons	For Decision	
<h1>Summary</h1>		
The report contains updates on the WPCC Committees.		
Resolution		
That the Board approve the appointment of Peter Shortt as Chairman of the Audit and Risk Committee and Mauro Mattiuzzo as Chairman of the Constitution Committee.		

Chairmen

The Committees that have met since the last Board meeting on 2 June 2024 have agreed the Chairmen as follows:

- i. Audit and Risk – Peter Shortt
- ii. Constitution Committee – Mauro Mattiuzzo

The board are asked to approve these appointments.

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators	22 July 2024	07.24.5ii
Subject: Board and Committee Matters	Non-Public	
Report of: EA to CE/Comms Officer	For Decision	
<h1>SUMMARY</h1> <p>This report sets out the proposed dates for the 2025 Meeting Calendar.</p>		

Following a request from Conservator David Brown asking if we could accommodate some long-standing holiday arrangements in 2025, we have put together the first draft of the 2025 meeting calendar.

The Board are asked to consider this first draft and make any suggestions for amendment.

Day	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December									
Monday									1			1									
Tuesday				1			1	FIC	2			2									
Wednesday	1	BH		2			2		3	1		3									
Thursday	2			3	Friends	1	3	Friends	4	2		4									
Friday	3			4		2	4		5	3		5	Christmas Reception TBC								
Saturday	4	1	1	5		3	5	2	6	4	1	6									
Sunday	5	2	2	6		4	6	3	7	5	2	7									
Monday	6	3	Board Meeting	3	7	5	BH	2	Board Meeting	7	4	8	Board Meeting								
Tuesday	7	Wildlife & Conservation	4	4	Wildlife & Conservation	8	FIC	6	Wildlife & Conservation	3	8	Wildlife & Conservation	5	9	Wildlife & Conservation	7	4	Wildlife & Conservation	9		
Wednesday	8		5	5		9		7		4	9		6	10		8		5	General Open Meeting	10	
Thursday	9	Friends	6	6	10		8		5	10		7	11		9	Friends	6			11	
Friday	10		7	7	11		9		6	11		8	12		10		7			12	
Saturday	11		8	8	12		10		7	12		9	13		11		8			13	Carols at the Windmill
Sunday	12		9	9	13		11		8	13		10	14	Open Day	12		9			14	
Monday	13		10	10	14	Board Meeting	12		9	14	Board Meeting	11	15		13	Board Meeting	10			15	
Tuesday	14	ARC	11	11	15		13	FIC	10	15		12	16		14		11			16	
Wednesday	15		12	12	16		14		11	16		13	17		15		12			17	
Thursday	16		13	13	17		15		12	17		14	18		16		13		Constitution Committee	18	
Friday	17		14	14	18	BH	16		13	18		15	19		17		14			19	
Saturday	18		15	15	19		17		14	19		16	20		18		15			20	
Sunday	19		16	16	20		18		15	20		17	21		19		16			21	
Monday	20		17	17	21	BH	19		16	21		18	22		20		17			22	
Tuesday	21	FIC	18	18	22		20	Joint FIC/ARC	17	22		19	23	ARC	21		18			23	
Wednesday	22		19	19	23		21		18	23		20	24		22		19			24	
Thursday	23		20	20	24		22		19	24		21	25		23		20			25	BH
Friday	24		21	21	25		23		20	25		22	26		24		21			26	BH
Saturday	25		22	22	26	Birdsong Course	24		21	26		23	27		25		22			27	
Sunday	26		23	23	27	Birdsong Course	25		22	27		24	28		26		23			28	
Monday	27		24	24	28		26	BH	23	28		25	BH	29	27		24			29	
Tuesday	28	Constitution Committee	25	25	ARC	29	Constitution Committee	27		24		29	Constitution Committee	26	30	FIC	28	25	FIC	30	
Wednesday	29		26	26	30		28		25	Annual Open Meeting	30		27		31		26			31	
Thursday	30		27	27			29		26			31			30		27				
Friday	31		28	28			30		27						31		28				
Saturday				29					28	Weekend of Nature			30				29				
Sunday				30					29	Weekend of Nature							30				
Monday				31					30												
Tuesday									31												

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	22 July 2024	07.24.6
Subject: Chief Executive's Report	Public	
Report of: Chief Executive of Wimbledon and Putney Commons	For Decision and Information	
<h1>SUMMARY</h1> <p>Draft Recommendation:</p> <p>That the Board receive and note the report.</p> <p>The Board approve the request to approve the draft AOM minutes by e-mail so that they can be published on the website in draft before being approved formally at the October Board meeting.</p>		

Keepers' Update

During June, the team continued to operate with four Keepers. The new Keeper, Carl Lacey, started work on 8 July and has settled in well and this will relieve some of the pressure on the team.

Another recruitment process is underway to fill the remaining post. The last campaign did not result in an appointment. Several people have expressed an interest, but the advert was posted on Facebook and has somehow gone viral – the post has nearly 500 comments and over 1,500 shares – this is great publicity but has resulted on nearly 70 applications so far.

The improving weather has increased visitor numbers with the start of the annual small gatherings of teenagers near The Causeway and Rushmere. There has been several incidents of end of term gatherings and one had over 200 children burning school books etc. some alcohol and drug paraphernalia were found.

With dusk being later the late turn Keeper is finishing at 2130hrs and the late-turn Keeper has had time to deal with "bandit" golfers including four unpaid green fees on a Bank Holiday – this amounts to a £160 loss to the Golf Club but, more importantly, the golfers are not covered by either club's insurance. There is also regular damage being done on the Greens in the evening or early hours of the morning. We are fully aware of this and will try to tackle it with better signage and when up to full strength increase number on late turn to deal with this. It is suspect the cyclists come to the Common when they know it is clear of staff.

A chap walking a XL bully has been challenged about not having a muzzle on. The matter has been reported to the Police and we have gathered evidence on cameras. However, he Recently came to the Ranger's Office with his dog muzzled, to ask for help is acclimatising his dog to horses. Our team will take the opportunity to work with him.

The horses are all well we have a summer break rota for them. During the summer we try to give them a month at grass in Surrey. Bolt Conduct has recently return from his holiday and was replaced by Scrumpy.

We had several public engagement visits from local schools and took part in the visit by managers from other similar open spaces.

Maintenance Update

The Maintenance Team have been continuing with routine summer work, focusing on tree safety, mowing and completing the installation of the Fixed Point Photography Posts.

With regard to mowing, the work has mainly focused on sightlines and overgrown paths. There have been many compliments on social media about how the cutting has been managed this year and the Commons are being held up as an example to other organisations that manage open spaces in the area.

Richardson Evans Memorial Playing Fields Update

Builders arrived to start work on the new Boiler Room and this has now been completed, been painted and emergency lighting installed

Following the rain we started Verti-Draining the pitches, a time-consuming exercise which takes some 6 hours per pitch. The Verti-drain was borrowed from the golf clubs and unfortunately it broke during use. The team were able to repair the broken part, saving some £700.

Two members of the team attended a groundsman seminar the Crowborough RFU ground, where there were some very interesting workshops and demonstrations. The main topic was drainage and the number of litres of water per pitch compared to previous years.

Doko Challenge, to raise money for the Gurkha Welfare, held a very successful day raising £6000 at a sponsored run event. The entrants carry baskets weight with sand ranging from 5kg, 10kg, and 15kg over a 5k run. The first back recorded a time of 24 minutes.

Work is underway to renew the weekend football contracts. The pitches are always popular and there is a waiting list for any availability.

The Mongolian Day of Culture was held on Sunday 7 July. Although the weather was far from kind, with thunder/lightening and heavy rain, this didn't prevent them having a good time.

General

Incident – 25 June 2024

On 25 June an Air Ambulance landed behind the Windmill Car Park and there were several police cars and ambulances in attendance following a report of a member of the public who had caused himself harm. Staff were involved in ferrying police and ambulance staff to the location. Fortunately the gentleman was found in good time and taken to hospital. Nothing further has been heard.

Wimbledon Tennis Complaints

Since the launch of the Complaints page on the WPCC website some years ago, we receive a large number of complaints to the inbox in relation to the tennis championships. We are not

clear why this is happening but perhaps those who do not know the area do not realise that there is more to Wimbledon than the tennis and they click on the first email address they see. Correspondence usually starts about the ticket draw, moves on to complaints about the commentary/strawberries/staff and, this year, about the AELTC's collaboration with Emirate Airlines. Correspondence after the event will relate to complaints about visitor experiences to the tennis and ticket refunds.

At the time of writing we had received just short of 80 e-mails which, compared to 2023's total of 200, is definitely an improvement. The WPCC website was updated last year to advise people that if they wished to complain about the tennis they had reached the wrong site and hopefully this has started to have an effect. A pro forma response is sent to each one.

Community Engagement and Events

“Commons Therapy” visit – 5 June 2024

The EA to CE is part of a group call “Commons Therapy”. The group is made up of representatives of other open spaces such as Malvern Hills, Tunbridge and Rusthall Commons, Ashdown Forest, Banstead Commons and Cleeve Common. They meet quarterly via Zoom and discuss matters that are of interest – it is surprising how much we all have in common with the same experiences and issues. On 5th June, Officers hosted the group for a visit here on the Commons. It proved invaluable from their perspective, and indeed for WPCC staff, and it was a great opportunity to swap knowledge and learn from each other.

Weekend of Nature – The annual Weekend of Nature took place on 21 to 23 June 2023. The weather held fair and all events were able to go ahead, other than the moth-trapping on the Saturday evening as our volunteer was struggling with bad hay fever. A full report is being prepared but highlights included:

- 8 field mice caught as part of the Small Mammal Survey
- 6 species of bat:
 - Soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*.
 - Daubenton's, *Myotis daubentonii*
 - Brown long-eared, *Plecotus auritus*
 - Common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*.
 - Nathusius pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus nathusii*
 - Leisler's, *Nyctalus leisleri*.
- A Sparrowhawk and Red Kite
- Kestrel catching its prey
- Bee Orchids
- Small Heath butterfly – found across the UK but is a UK BAP priority species for conservation as their numbers have declined considerably.

Annual Open Meeting – 24 June 2024

The meeting went well although only 33 members of the public attended. However, the meeting did clash with both football and a local hustings meeting.

As it has not been possible to prepare the minutes of the meeting, and given that the next Board meeting is not until October 2024, the Board are asked if they are willing to approve the draft minutes of the AOM by e-mail to allow them to be published on the website in draft form, with the proviso that they are brought to the October meeting for formal approval.

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	22 July 2024	07.24.7
Subject: Conservation Update	Public	
Report of: Conservation and Engagement Officer	For Information	

Summary

This report provides a summary of Conservation activity during June and July 2024.

Heathland Management

Over the past two months, heathland management on the Commons has involved the following activities.

- Volunteer groups (x 4) scrub bashing on the heathland. Areas have included heathland near Roehampton Ride, Jubilee Path and Centre Path.



Scrub bashing locations from 2 June 2024 to 22 July 2024 (above)

- All scrub bashing sessions were followed up by the Commons' Maintenance Team to ensure that all small tree stumps were made safe, and all cut materials were chipped.
- Low growing bramble has been mown within the confines of a woodland edge close to Ladies Mile.

- Bracken rolling has been carried out on all areas of open heathland. Cutting and removal of the flattened bracken will be incorporated into future volunteer scrub bashing sessions.

The Beverley Brook

Over the past two months, the following activities have been carried out along the Beverley Brook on Wimbledon and Putney Commons:

- Reduction of shade bearing trees and branches along the edge of the brook. Two visits have been made to Wimbledon Common and one session has been made to Putney Lower Common.
- Volunteer litter picking sessions (x3) were held along the Wimbledon Common section of the Beverley Brook.
- Volunteers carried out further clearance of Himalayan balsam on Wimbledon Common.



Cutting back shade bearing trees along the brook: Over the past few months, young holly, sycamore and blackthorn have been cut back along the edge of the Beverley Brook to help increase the amount of light that is able to reach the watercourse below.

Pond Management

On 27 June, the Commons' Conservation Team removed all visible signs of a highly invasive plant called Duck potato (also known as broadleaf arrowhead) from Ravine Pond. Native to southern Canada and most of the contiguous United States, this plant can be marginal or submerged aquatic. It often grows together in crowded colonies and is spread by runners at or just below the soil surface.

It is anticipated that further visits will be required in the future to help control this species and therefore, Ravine Pond will be regularly monitored.



Duck potato removed from Ravine Pond.

Grassland Management

Over the past two months, the following management has been carried out on the Commons grassland sites:

- Further work has been carried out to control bracken and bramble from invading the edge of selected fairways.
- The Wimbledon Common Golf Course has been visited by PH and all fairways have been measured to ensure they do not exceed a width of 20 metres. Given the rainfall that was experienced on the Commons during spring 2024, vegetation in the rough which is comprised of acid grassland, appears very impressive.
- Sarah Murton (WPCC Conservation Team) has been involved with grassland monitoring on all sites that are currently managed through a programme of cut and collect. Sarah has met with former Conservator Dr Ros Taylor to discuss best practice for monitoring these areas of the Commons.



Between November 2023 and April 2024, work was carried out along the edge of various fairways on the Wimbledon Common Golf Course to help protect and improve areas of acid grassland. Follow up work has involved bracken pulling and the mowing of bramble. The photograph above shows the edge of Running Deer fairway.



Hope Grant (top) Long hole (bottom) photograph taken on 4 July 2024

Wildlife monitoring

Bat monitoring project

On 4 July, PH and Philip Briggs (Monitoring Manager: Bat Conservation Trust) positioned a bat monitoring device along the woodland edge at Stag Bog.

This is part of a new national project called the British Bat Survey which is being run by the Bat Conservation Trust.

The monitoring survey involves putting out static bat detectors at locations within a randomly generated set of 1km squares across the UK, stratified by region and Land Cover Type. The device will remain in situ for two periods of five nights in July 2024, and it is anticipated this will be an annual monitoring site, for two survey periods of five nights each year in July. The data will contribute to the production of bat species population trends at the GB, England and London/Southeast scales. The results from this survey will be shared with the Commons in due course.



Bat monitoring device at Stag Bog

Putney Lower Common Trail Cameras.

Two trail cameras were positioned on Putney Lower Common during June 2024. Following the initial positioning of these cameras, they were both checked two weeks later to ensure everything was working correctly. During this first inspection, the following species were identified:

- Grey squirrel
- Brown rat
- Red fox
- Domestic dog
- Small mammal (difficult to identify but probably a mouse)
- Magpie
- Robin
- Pigeon
- Hedgehog



Fox (above)



Brown rat



Hedgehog

Volunteering on the Commons (2 June to 26 July 2024)

- Sunday morning scrub bashers
- Mid-week volunteers (scrub bashing near Centre Path and Stag Bog)
- Beverley Brook litter picking group.
- Beverley Brook – Himalayan balsam removal
- General litter picking carried out by individual volunteers
- Organised litter picking sessions x 4
- Duke of Edinburgh litter pickers
- Help with events
- Wildlife recording



Public Engagement Events:

PH visit to Bramley Golf Club to attend the spring meeting of the Golf Club Managers Association. This invite had been extended to PH by the Wimbledon Common Golf Club as the subject of the main presentation was on sustainable golf. Areas covered by the presentation included:

- Course performance and presentation
- Understanding the influence of course design and managing microclimate conditions
- Grass species management

- Water security
- Ecology and biodiversity

PH and Jack Rowland (WPCC Maintenance Manager) visit to Bushey Park to meet with the park's ecology Officer and Park Manager and members of the Friends of Cannizaro Park to discuss the recent pond restoration projects that had been carried out at Bushey Park.

Tour of the Commons for the Commons Therapy group. This is a group that Angela Evans-Hill is involved with and is made up of representatives from several different open spaces including, Cleeve Common, Malvern Hills, Tunbridge Wells and Rusthall Commons, Ashford Forest, Banstead Commons and the National Trust. On 5 June 2024, representatives from some of these groups were provided with a tractor ride around part of the Commons and discussions were had about how various members of the group carried out management on their own sites.

PH meeting and tour of the Commons for Sarah Smith who is a member of the Royal Photographic Society. The society are currently running a project entitled 'Sustainable London' and therefore this provided us with a platform to showcase the work that was being carried out on the Commons.

Regular Health walks on the Commons – The Commons continue to provide a programme of regular health walks on the Commons which occur every three weeks. These walks take one hour to complete and are led by a member of the WPCC Conservation Team. These walks allow the Commons to reach a wider audience and help educate people about various aspects of the management of the Commons.

London in Bloom – Once again WPCC have entered Wimbledon Common and Putney Lower Common as separate entries into this year's London in Bloom campaign. PH provided two judges with a tour of Wimbledon Common on 17 June and a separate judge with a tour of Putney Lower Common on 26 June. Results will become available during September 2024.

WPCC Weekend of Nature – 2024 provided another enjoyable Weekend of Nature on the Commons with a host of wildlife experts and visitors involved with the collection of important data. This event involved small mammal trapping, butterfly and dragonfly walk, bat walk, bird walk, opening of the moth trap and a general nature walk. At the base camp, which was located close to the Rangers Office, the following stall and groups were assembled:

- WPCC information
- Friends of WPCC
- Wimbledon Common Nature Club
- Quekett Microscopical
- SW15 hedgehogs
- Reptile events.

Conservators Annual Meeting held during the evening of 24 June provided another useful platform for the Commons Conservators and staff to meet with the public and provide information about the land management that is taking place on the Commons.

Committee(s):	Date(s):	Item no.
Board of Conservators	22 July 2024	07.24.8
Subject: Fundraising Update		Public
Report of: Fundraising Manager		For Information
Summary		
This report provides a summary of fundraising activity in late June/July 2024.		

Public Donations

The Fundraising Manager and members of the Friends of WPCC attended the Park Run Summer Run which was staged on the Commons. Despite the inclement weather and relatively low turnout, just shy of £600 was raised.

A similar fundraising drive will take place at the forthcoming Wimbledon Half Marathon at REMPF, organised by RunThrough.

Rewilding Queensmere

Tenders have been sent out to potential suppliers who have a deadline of mid-August to submit proposals.

Supplementary funds are being raised by the offer of memorial benches and other dedications on site.

The Big Give

Following the success of the Big Give earlier this year, we are applying to the Big Give Christmas Challenge to run a match fund campaign for the Queensmere project, deadline 19 July.

Legacies

A major legacy donation was received from the estate of a prominent professor, with the executors selecting WPCC as a beneficiary.

Dedications

A master list of WPCC benches is being created to identify potential new locations for benches which are being offered to applicants on the dedications waiting list.

Wildlife and Conservation Forum meeting dated 7 May 2024 - FINAL

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

Oliver Bennett - Conservator (OB)
Sue Bucknall – Conservator (SB)
Colin Cooper – Chief Executive (CC)
Angela Evans-Hill – EA & Comms Officer (AEH)
Les Evans-Hill - volunteer (LEH)
Peter Haldane – Conservation & Engagement Officer (PH)
Michael Johnston – Conservator (MJ)
Mauro Mattiuzzo – Conservator (MM)
Simon Riley - volunteer (SR)
Henry Wilson – volunteer (HW)

1. Apologies were received from Ros Taylor, Adrian Podmore, Andrew Harding and Andy Davies.
2. The minutes of the Forum meeting of 11 March 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 material changes.**
 - b) **Actions point - PH to circulate Queensmere restoration report. A revised version is now available.**
 - c) **Action point - CC to circulate his thoughts on changing the make-up and constitution of this Forum**
 - d) **Action point – CC to write to London Wildlife Trust regarding Farm Bog.** (Background LWT have been encouraging their members to visit Farm Bog in their magazine). CC also noted that a TEDx “Climate Emergency Workshop” had been organised for Farm Bog without reference to Commons’ staff. This is apparently a large event and some sort of guidance/staff attendance may be necessary for this sensitive site.
4. Fundraising update – Maggie May (MM) is now on maternity leave. Lynn Farrant has been recruited as maternity cover until early March 2025. Big Give week raised £12,000 (which included £5,000 of matched funding). The Queensmere project is only partly funded and final costings are yet to be determined. One proposal to make up the shortfall is the “sale” of named benches for which there is high demand. Other fund raising opportunities will need to be considered. With regard to the Peatland Project the proposals are still with Natural England. Until funding streams arise it is likely that this project may need to be subdivided with initial work carried out by volunteers

5. CC mentioned that Sarah Murton from the Maintenance Team had recently been permanently transferred to the Conservation Department as Conservation Ranger reporting directly to PH. Sarah has wide experience including previously working for seven years at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust at Barnes. It is envisaged that Sarah will to help PH with the implementation of the Land Management Plan. It was commented and agreed that Sarah ought to be invited to the Forum meetings in the future. **Action point – PH to discuss with Sarah.**
6. Conservation update – PH circulated his report prior to the meeting. OB was particularly pleased to hear about the removal of the carp (some very large) from many of the ponds. These non-native fish are often implicated in damage to ponds and lakes, in particular they can increase turbidity through their feeding action. PH also mentioned that he often got calls in the summer about oxygen distress of these fish which took up management time.
7. Recorder and monitoring updates.

AP circulated a recent bird sightings report to the group prior to the meeting. LEH mentioned that a few Willow Warblers appeared to be staying around (rather than moving north on migration) which suggests that some may stay to breed. This species has almost disappeared from the Commons as a breeding species over recent years having previously been abundant.

LEH mentioned that he has had little opportunity to record moths recently.

HW said that he was still finding new beetle species. The poor weather did not appear to be impacting ground beetles however flying species had been less evident.

Butterfly and dragonfly recording had been limited because of the cool and wet weather experienced recently

Regarding the 2023 Monitoring Report OB confirmed that this was nearing completion. OB suggested that for the future the report could be used to inform decision making regarding future management (eg The Plain) and that perhaps contributors could make suggestions/observations around the conservation land management that is being carried out or is proposed as part of their submissions.

OB felt that a number of other improvements could be made to the Monitoring Report. This would not only make the report easier to prepare but also make it a more readable and useful document. OB would like there to be more consistency as to how data is presented by the various recorders for inclusion in the report. For example data could include more detailed location information as well as date and conservation status (both regional and national). **Action point – OB to discuss some ideas with Sarah/PH.**

OB mentioned that a press release had accompanied the publication of the 2022 Monitoring Report last year. OB would like the same to happen this year, he assumed that this would require Board approval first. **Action Point – OB to follow this point up with AEH and CC.**

OB had two suggestions for additional Forum members who might add to the group expertise. Henry Miller – a botanist – see AOB 9a – for reference to his work on the plants of Farm Bog and Nick Haswell for his expertise on spiders. **Action Point – OB to invite to future Forum meetings.**

8. Events and Future events – SB expressed her thanks to LEH for the bird walk he led for the Friends of Wimbledon & Putney Commons. This was very well received by members of the Friends. SB also thanked LEH for escorting 34 cubs and scouts around the Commons recently.

LEH mentioned that the birdsong workshop he led had also gone well.

Weekend of Nature – AEH stated that a draft timetable of events had been circulated a few weeks ago.

SB asked whether this event could be better advertised. MM mentioned that there was a new information board near the Dog and Fox. In addition he mentioned that the Wimbledon Village Business Association have a new website – WimbledonVillage.com. **Action point – AEH to look into additional advertising opportunities.**

It was suggested that the general nature walks could be a little shorter – maybe maximum 1hr, with 2 walks during the day. OB volunteered to lead.

CC would also like to see more engagement by the Forum on the Commons' Open Day (8 September 2024). This might be an opportunity for more walks – for example. SB also suggested a litter pick event which are surprisingly popular.

9. AOB

- a) SR noted the recent report circulated by Henry Miller regarding the various carnivorous plants that were now growing on Farm Bog. These include species that have been recorded historically, those that are UK species but for which there are no historical records and some “exotic” species too. It was felt that a proper discussion needs to take place to develop a policy in this area (for example consideration needs to be given to the removal of some species). Some thought also needs to be given as to how we discourage the inappropriate introductions of species to the Commons. **Action point – to be discussed further at a future meeting.**

- b) Date of next meeting 16 July 2024

Future Dates

Forum meetings

16 July 2024

3 September 2024

12 November 2024

Other

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 (a camera has been purchased and is ready to install)

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



Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Media Release July 2024

WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENT MONITORING REPORT

The Conservators are pleased to announce the release of the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Wildlife and Environment Monitoring Report for 2023.

The Commons comprise 1,140 acres and are one of the UK's most important natural landscapes. It is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and around 80% of the Commons were made a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 1953, making it one of the finest and oldest protected areas in England. In 2004, large parts were also made a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), in recognition of its internationally important habitats and species.

The first annual monitoring report was produced in 2014 when the Conservators were keen to get a sense of how their management of the area known as "The Plain" (the open area adjacent to Windmill Road) was impacting its ability to provide an area for ground-nesting birds, particularly Skylarks, and other species important to a thriving area of acid grassland.

Since then, the monitoring has spread to the Commons as a whole and incorporates birds, butterflies, dragonflies, beetles, reptiles and amphibians, moths and plants.

Points of note from 2023 include:

- **Moths** - A massive 459 species of moth were recorded. 22 of these are threatened in the UK. One of these species, the Light Crimson Underwing, is reliant on old Oak trees, making our work to protect and manage our woodlands vital to the survival of this species.
- **Birds** - The total count of 87 bird species reflected what is now a normal year for birds on the Common although many species records were just for one or two sightings. There were some worrying absences, including Whinchat and Dartford Warblers, however the year ended with some good winter visitors including Waxwing, Redpoll and Siskin.
- **Butterflies** - 28 species of butterfly were recorded on the Commons in 2023, the same number as in 2022. After a very slow start 2023 turned out to be a surprisingly good year for the more common species of butterfly, including Gatekeeper, Red Admiral and Holly Blue, along with some rare species such as Marbled White and Brown Argus.
- **Beetles** - Over 190 beetle species were found. Some of these are exceptionally rare, endangered, and restricted to just a handful of locations in the UK.

Defra-appointed Conservator, Oliver Bennett, commented: "The Commons provide a vital green space for Londoners, but it is also home to an important array of wildlife and nationally

scarce habitats. Our monitoring continues to expand thanks to a team of dedicated volunteers and also sightings made by visitors. We were particularly delighted that a Slow Worm was recorded on Putney Lower Common. This legless lizard has never been recorded in Putney before.

The beetle monitoring has been extraordinary and something of an eye-opener for staff. Could the Commons be an as-yet undiscovered nationally important site for beetles?

Whilst we have many reports of species new to the Commons, 2023 has again shown an overall decline in numbers recorded, which is reflecting the national and international picture. It is possible these species have simply been here but not recorded, or there is a shift in species found here given the effects of a changing climate. Time will tell.

Conservators and staff are grateful to all those who contributed to this report, and to all the volunteers who gave up their time and energy to protect this unique ancient landscape."

Copies of the full report can be found at www.wpcc.org.uk/monitoringreport

ENDS

NOTES for Editors - Wimbledon and Putney Commons is a charity managed by the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators (WPCC). It was established under the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act of 1871. The Commons comprise some 1,140 acres across Wimbledon Common, Putney Heath and Putney Lower Common.

Contact: Oliver Bennett, Defra Appointed Conservator
Tel: 020 8788 7655, E-mail: rangersoffice@wpcc.org.uk website: www.wpcc.org.uk

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