

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators – December 2019

Notes of the Conservators' General Open Meeting held at the London Scottish Golf Club, Windmill Road, SW19 5NQ on 9th December 2019

Conservators: Diane Neil Mills, Elected (Chairman)
Shirley Gillbe, Elected
David Hince, Elected
Peter Hirsch, Elected
Sarah-Jane Holden, Elected
Mike Rappolt, Appointed MoD
Dr Ros Taylor, Appointed DEFRA
Nigel Ware, Appointed Home Office

Officers: Mr Simon Lee (Chief Executive)

Approximately 45 Levy-payers and other members of the general public

1. Welcome

Chairman

On behalf of the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this General Open Meeting. We are grateful for the commitment and interest in the Commons that tonight's attendance clearly reflects. I would like to extend a special welcome to Emma Pope, General Manager of the Wimbledon Common Golf Club who has kindly agreed to speak this evening. I would also like to thank our hosts, the London Scottish Golf Club for their hospitality. The idea of holding a second open meeting is to provide members of the local community a further opportunity to share their views on the Commons with us. The Agenda is compiled with that on mind.

The Chairman invited the Conservators and the Chief Executive to introduce themselves.

2. Chairman's Update

Chairman

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although the Chairman's report at the open meetings normally focuses on strategic matters, the key initiative in this area, amending the constitution, will be addressed later in the meeting as a separate agenda item. As such, I will focus my report this evening on more operational matters, which are normally addressed by the chief executive, but with his agreement, it does allow me to present a slightly different perspective. This will also allow the chief executive to dedicate his address this evening to the important work that he is leading under funding generously provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

To detail the full programme of events and undertakings that have been carried out since our last open meeting in June would consume the entire evening so I will focus on a few highlights, which curiously all took place within a reasonably short and admittedly hectic period during the month of September.

I will start with the Open Day, which was held in glorious sunshine on 8 September. True to the Open Day's origins, the event maintained its ethos of being a local event for local people. Meeting the horses and the keepers in the Stable Yard remained as popular as ever, as did the now infamous Wacky Dog Show. Along with the many local charity and business stalls, visitors enjoyed craft demonstrations, riding and dog-handling displays.

The Open Day's wonderfully informal and spontaneous character belies the thought, meticulous planning and care that officers put into organising the day. The Swiss like efficiency in which the impressive programme of activities is delivered however is a clear reflection of the team's experience and competence in managing large scale public events of this nature.

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In fact, this year we estimate that over 10,000 people attended the Open Day and we are enormously grateful to all of those who supported the occasion including the very generous donations that were received at the end of the day.

Less than two weeks after the Open Day, on 20 September, we celebrated the launch of the Friends of Wimbledon and Putney Commons, an initiative that brings together members of the community who are connected by a passion for the Commons for the dual purposes of collective celebration and fund raising.

The special evening celebrated the historic links between the Commons and the London Scottish Regiment through words, music, food and wine commencing with a piper led walk from the windmill through the woods to a recital on the banks of Queensmere and finishing with a reception in this very room.

The meteorological conditions could not have been more perfect: clear skies, moderate temperatures, auspicious moon phasing and star alignment and an easterly breeze of 7.5 miles per hour, the perfect conditions to allow the sails of the windmill to be unleashed. The iconic Grade II listed windmill effortlessly turning in the setting sun provided the perfect setting for the welcome reception for the evening and I would like to thank Asif Malik, Chairman of the Windmill Museum Trustees, for his support. Incidentally, under his leadership, the museum has gone from strength to strength, with visitor numbers exceeding 11,500 people so far this year and shop sales up a healthy 40 percent.

The Friends' programme is firmly on track; as of the end of October, membership totalled 211, two thirds of which represent households with more than one person so a total involvement of over 350 people. The Friends' Programme, under the leadership of my fellow Conservator Sarah Jane Holden, is putting together the programme of events that will hopefully take us to the 150th anniversary of the date on which the Wimbledon and Putney Commons Act received royal assent on 16 August 1871.

The last remaining droplets of candle wax from the banks of Queensmere had only just been cleared away when the weather made an abrupt turn for the worse. The deluge of 24 September proved to be one of the more challenging events of the autumn, causing significant damage to a number of paths and rides across the Commons and diverting the maintenance team from other planned works in order to undertake repairs to many of the paths, particularly those on the slopes down from the golf course.

Other works have been undertaken to improve accessibility along Lady's Mile. This major arterial path running through Putney Heath has been subject to extreme flooding. The maintenance team have reinstated the paths and created a new lagoon, creating a new and important small wetland habitat.

The final event that I will mention is the Wimbledon Guild Waggy Walk, which took place on 28 September. Whilst our role in this event was quite simply to provide the venue, I mention it because in many ways it demonstrates the important role that the Commons play not only in providing opportunities for physical and mental stimulation in a magnificent natural open space but in promoting social welfare, evidenced by the fact that I understand that a not insignificant number of the more than 500 participants in the Waggy Walk do not even own dogs.

And in the midst of all of this activity, we received not only a positive result from the National Lottery Heritage Fund but the award of 'Commons of the Year' for Wimbledon Common and two gold awards from the London in Bloom competition. It is an astounding achievement and dare I say one that is truly well-deserved. It is an enormously positive endorsement and reflects the dedication, talent and commitment of every member of the team, led by Simon Lee, the chief executive, to achieve the highest standard of public open space. And our duty, as Conservators,

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is to provide the strategic oversight and support necessary to allow the organisation to continue to build upon its successes over the years ahead.

Thank you very much.

3. Golf on Wimbledon Common

Emma Hope of the Wimbledon Common Golf Club gave a presentation about golf on the Commons.

4. The Mounted Keepers

Richard Thompson, Head Keeper

Richard Thompson, Head Keeper, gave a presentation on the work of the keepers on the Commons.

5. Heritage Lottery Update

Simon Lee, Chief Executive

I am delighted to be able to report on this project which has only been possible because of the support of the Board and the assistance of the Windmill Trustees. Although not successful at the first application, the National Lottery Heritage Fund encouraged the charity to look again at our application and to resubmit. We were then fortunate to have been awarded a grant of £126,100 towards the development of a master plan and associated documents. It is important to stress that this is not a project about building and changing the Commons but about developing a vision for the future of our Commons – “Commons for the Next Generation – Green Space for All”.

Following a rigorous tender process, the charity appointed consultants, Barker Langham to help us with the project. During the tender process, Barker Langham clearly understood the Commons and what they are about, the need to take an holistic approach, and to not look at the Masterplan in isolation but to also look at volunteering, education, interpretation, buildings and the infrastructure as well as the landscape. They also work with partners who would be involved in the project: Barry Stow a conservation architect who will be looking buildings, including the Windmill; and MRG Studios, another local company, who are assisting with the ecology and landscape.

This documentation, once completed, will enable the Charity to hopefully submit a further lottery bid to get capital money to fund the implementation of the masterplan. A masterplan, supported by a series of principles, articulates how we envisage the Commons will be for the next generation and how the landscape and built assets relate to each other through interpretation, visitor facilities and landscape management.

It is essential to strike the right balance when it comes to visitors. Should it be about increasing accessibility or targeting those that don't use the Commons – what barriers are there to accessibility. Surveys are currently taking place to gather the views of those using the Commons, both on-site and online, as well as interviews with a number of focus groups.

There are three phases to the project:

Phase 1 – Situational Analysis:

Tasks

- On-site user survey
- Online survey
- Visitor mapping
- Landscape assessment
- Built heritage analysis

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Deliverables:

- Situation Analysis
- Visitor Research
- Access Audit

Phase 2 – Visioning and Options Appraisal

Tasks:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Expert interviews
- Focus groups
- Options development and scoring
- Options workshop

Deliverables:

- Options Appraisal

It is hoped to have an exhibition on the Common to allow visitors to comment.

Phase 3 - Masterplan Development

Tasks:

- Consolidate preferred options
- Interdisciplinary development of final plans

Deliverables:

- Masterplan
- Conservation Management
- Audience Development
- Volunteer Development
- Education and Interpretation
- Business Plan

The next stages of the project are: built heritage assessment; on-site and online survey; research and analysis; and landscape assessment.

The Board have also recognised the issues with the buildings at the REMPF and have agreed to extend the scope of the work in that area to include a RIBA Stage 1 feasibility survey.

I would be grateful if all of you here this evening could spread the word about the surveys taking place – there are links on the WPCC website.

6. Potential Changes to WPCC's Constitution

Chairman

The Ten-Year Strategy for the Commons, adopted by the previous Board in June 2017, identified the need to review the constitution to address, inter alia, governance matters and the levy.

At our first meeting as the newly constituted Board on 12 April 2018, we agreed to support this initiative, recognising the potential of constitutional reform to enhance our ability to carry out the duties of preserving, protecting and enhancing the Commons as articulated in the 1871 Act.

We agreed to progress this work through the Constitution Working Group, in accordance with the terms of reference, which were subsequently developed and published in June 2018.

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It might be helpful to mention the membership of the working group, which we also published in the resolutions. The group is chaired by the chief executive and comprises five Conservators and two external representatives, both of whom are leading experts in their fields: Mrs Francesca Quint, a specialist charity barrister, and George Laurence QC, a leading expert in open spaces.

They have both most generously given an enormous amount of their time in a voluntary capacity over the past 18 months and continue to make a significant and valuable contribution; we are most indebted to them for their support.

In the interests of transparency, we would like to clarify that any informal support provided to the working group by the external members has from the outset and continues to be made on the understanding that it does not constitute formal advice. If either barrister were engaged to provide formal advice, that would be done by solicitors instructing counsel in the normal way, if appropriate.

The terms of reference provide clarity of scope and purpose and identify the key drivers of constitutional reform. Importantly, they recognise the critical importance of retaining the very high degree of protection afforded by the 1871 Act.

The terms of reference also recognise WPCC's independence and unique character and the importance of resisting attempts to simply standardise the organisation in line with other charities or other bodies with similar purposes as part of the constitutional amendment process.

In accordance with these stated aims, the working group has undertaken a series of investigations over the past 18 months in an attempt to understand both the key matters requiring constitutional reform and the procedures through which such reforms could potentially be introduced into the constitution.

I should also add that our approach is very much targeted at amending key provisions of the Act; it is not an attempt to rewrite the entire 1871 Act but is focused on enhancing our ability to deliver our fundamental duties.

We are therefore now at a stage at which the Board has agreed to initiate a consultation process in order to understand the views regarding potential amendments to our constitutional framework in three areas, each of which I will go through in turn.

Before I do that, let me explain a bit more about the consultation process itself.

We recognise that public support of any proposal seeking to reform the constitution is essential and we are therefore keen to seek views from members of the public at the earliest opportunity.

The Board has therefore agreed that the consultation will be carried out on a phased basis, moving from preliminaries to concepts and principles before starting to formulate specific policies, effectively an evolutionary process. Before each phase of the consultation, the Board will agree the consultation materials for the next phase, reflecting feedback from previous phases.

Last week's media release announcing the Board resolution was intended to communicate the scope and approach of the programme.

The first formal phase of the consultation process will commence in February 2020 and it is anticipated that the consultation process will last until at least the end of June 2020 but more likely until October 2020.

We recognise that there are many questions, even at this preliminary stage, which is totally understandable. Following tonight's meeting, we are proposing to compile a Q&A for publication

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on the website that will set out answers to matters raised tonight as well as other areas that we believe will help facilitate understanding of the process.

The Conservators have agreed that any decision to make a formal application to the relevant authorities to amend the constitution will only be contemplated by the Board after the specific policies (including draft text) have undergone meaningful and proportionate public consultation.

We will be engaging an independent firm, specialised in consultation exercises, to manage and conduct the consultation.

Consultation channels have not yet been determined but in accordance with Charity Commission guidance will likely involve a number of options such as an information centre, open days, website consultation, focus groups, questionnaires and formal written consultations. The consultation will include all stakeholders including politicians.

I will now address the three specific areas proposed for amendment:

1. Finance

- A founding principle of the 1871 Act is that the levy is intended to serve as the principal source of funding to maintain the Commons
- The levy currently generates £1.2 million of £1.8 million expenditure with the balance provided by user fees, investment returns and leases on buildings; the aggregate levy is indexed to RPI
- Current revenue no longer meets requirements and planned preventative maintenance and capital investment has suffered (particularly buildings)
- Fundraising activities make a contribution but cannot provide the basis for long-term planning though do assist through one-off expenditure via capital campaigns
- Any increase will be evidence based; research is being conducted to

(a) explain the current position in the historical context and

(b) determine future funding requirements based on independent assessment of future capital and operating costs reflecting expected visitor numbers (proper maintenance and capital investment)

- As such, there will be no view on quantum until this work is completed but as the evidence base develops, where appropriate the research results will be shared as part of the consultation process
- Visitor numbers is a key cost driver and the last time any work was undertaken to understand visitor numbers was in 1976: 3 days in each of April and July ranging from 1,600 to 10,600 (possibly Easter Sunday) with an average of 5,200
- The levy may potentially be amended either by Statutory Instrument (SI) or private bill; the Conservators' preference at this stage is for SI due to advantages in terms of cost, risk and timescales but we still need to confirm the feasibility of doing so and parliamentary procedure; we also need to pursue contacts with DEFRA as sponsoring department; securing the support of local MPs is also critical
- Amendment by SI will almost certainly therefore be confined to rebasing the quantum; despite strong intellectual arguments for reviewing the levy boundary and amending the levy mechanism, that would require primary legislation in form of a private bill and our duty to make best use of charity resources favours the use of secondary legislation if possible
- We will continue to use other fundraising mechanisms (eg, Friends, voluntary parking scheme) as a way of engaging those outside the levy area

2. Operations

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- Both the natural and built landscapes of the Commons have evolved since 1871 in accordance with powers and duties conferred and imposed on Conservators (eg, Richardson Evans expansion in the 1920s and works associated with Tibbets Corner in the 1960s)
- The 1871 Act provides a clear purpose and duties governing stewardship of the Commons with repeated references in preamble and the act itself to preserving, protecting and enhancing the Commons, keeping the Commons open, unenclosed and unbuilt upon for the purposes of recreation and exercise
- And there is neither a desire nor intention to dilute this very high level of protection that is afforded to one of the most precious resources in the country by altering the charitable purposes or diminishing the duties of the Conservators
- But despite this clarity of objectives and duties of the 1871 Act, specific provisions regarding certain powers and prohibitions are in some cases less clear, if not absent, particularly with respect to the buildings (eg, demolition and relocation of buildings)
- This lack of clarity has led to uncertainties in the constitutional status in some of the buildings, necessitating endless legal opinions, which are occasionally contradictory and in any event not definitive – matters can only be settled by the courts
- The purpose of constitutional reform in this area is therefore to ensure that there is a sound legal basis for future investment in all aspects of the Commons, allowing the Conservators to carry out proper long-term planning of the estate
- Process will be done through mapping of estate (1871 and 2019) identifying all changes since 1871 (natural and built environments) and the provisions through which such changes were made, with a view to agreeing the new baseline
- Process will also clarify legislative framework, particularly relating to buildings and access rights, reflecting court judgments that have been made (as far back as 1894) and reducing future time and expense seeking legal opinions before contemplating every investment decision
- Proposed route is via a scheme under Section 73 of the Charities Act 2011; we are very fortunate to have the support in principle of the Charity Commission for a scheme, with whom we have met and shared our views on the broad areas requiring amendment
- We have also communicated to the Commission that we want to consult on actual proposed policies before contemplating a decision to file an application with the Commission
- Having the support of the Charity Commission is essential; it is a positive endorsement of the organisation and reflects the efforts we have made in this area
- Consultation will involve agreeing principles before proposing specific policies; the mapping exercise is therefore critical and we aim to complete this by February 2020

3. Governance

- Governance arrangements for the 1871 Act are primarily set out in the Commissioners Clauses Act 1847, which is subordinate to 1871 Act
- Current arrangements present operational challenges for managing a charity in the 21st century in certain areas (eg, alignment between Commissioners Clauses and the Charities Act in matters such as approving annual accounts)
- Updating the Commissioners Clauses Act 1847 is an important step in improving the effectiveness of WPCC's governance arrangements
- In addition, there is a need to clarify a number of election procedures (eg, deadline to declare candidacy)
- As published in June 2018 and September 2018 resolutions, the Board has agreed draft election guidelines, which have been reviewed by an independent body (Electoral Reform Services – now Civica Election Services); we are awaiting the report of the Charity Commission on the Statutory Investigation, which is looking at election, before taking these further
- We will aim to have procedures in place before 2021 elections

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- These changes will also be included in the Charity Commission scheme

In closing, the delivery of the masterplan which will articulate the long-term vision for the Commons, will require sustainable financial capacity, operational clarity and effective governance, and the constitutional amendment process, if successful, will provide this resilience.

Thank you.

7. Financial Update

Nigel Ware

Good evening.

I am going to give you a brief update on the development of WPCC's finances in the current financial year.

Our unrestricted income for the 7 months to the end of October was £1,068,000 which was about £72,000 ahead of budget. Our unrestricted expenditure for the same period was £1,054,000 which was £147,000 less than budget. The overall result on unrestricted activities during the seven months was an operating profit of £14,000. For the most part these favourable variances against budget are as a result of the timing of income and expenditure not being quite as we expected.

The figures that I have mentioned for expenditure and operating profit are before taking account of any of the additional non-cash charges that we will have to include in our financial statements at the end of the financial year in relation to our participation in the Local Government Pension Scheme.

When I spoke at the Annual Open Meeting in June, I said that we were expecting to make an operating loss for the full year because of the need to spend money on replacing the maintenance centre roof and some of the boilers in the pavilion at the playing fields. The maintenance centre roof has now been replaced but, following external advice, it has been decided to defer the replacement of the boilers.

In addition to our unrestricted income and expenditure, we have had income and expenditure on our restricted funds. We received £15,000 of restricted income in the period which was added to our restricted funds brought forward from last year of £38,000. During the period to the end of October we incurred £2,000 of restricted expenditure with the result that at the end of the period we had a balance on restricted reserves of £51,000.

Our cash balances at the end of October amounted to £414,000 and our portfolio of investments was valued at £1,589,000 which represented an increase in value of £50,000 since 1 April 2019.

Each month we update our forecast of the expected outcome for the current financial year and we prepare a rolling twelve-month cash flow forecast. Our present forecast indicates an operating loss of about £150,000 on unrestricted funds for the full year which is about £70,000 better than we had anticipated at the beginning of the year mainly because of the deferral of the work on the boilers.

That concludes my presentation. If you have any questions on the charity's finances, I will deal with them during the Q&A session at the end of the meeting.

8. Questions & Answers

The Chairman called for questions asking if people were comfortable to do so to identify themselves so that names could be recorded in the minutes.

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1. James Leek, local resident.

Mr Leek asked about the wood for sale for burning and questioned whether it was right to do so. He asked how much it contributed to income and, if it was not sold, how much would it cost for it to be taken away.

The Chief Executive responded that anyone coming to buy wood was advised that the current stock was not suitable for burning now and should be stored for at least six months. The stock of wood has been reduced substantially and ultimately the sale of it would stop. We do not have the facility to dry the wood on site. In the budget sales were expected to be around £15,000 this year, down from close on £30,000 in previous years. He confirmed it was not just wood from the Commons – local tree contractors also delivered wood free of charge. Most wood on the Commons is left in place as it forms important invertebrate habitats. The Board needed to confirm what their policy would be moving forward.

2. John Mays, local resident

Mr Mays commented that he believed he spoke for many people when he said that he appreciated the efficiency with which problems were tackled by staff. His query related to the environment and climate change and wondered if this was being address in any way on the Commons.

Dr Taylor commented that this was an enormous topic which did need addressing. It was hoped to install a weather station to greatly help our understanding of the fluctuations in the weather conditions on the Commons. The Board and the Wildlife & Conservation Committee were very aware of the issues but it was important not to make any knee jerk reactions – for instance, last summer the ponds were almost dried up but now, after heavy rains, they were filling up again. There was a regime of extremes and it was a question of intelligently monitoring and assessing what might be gained or what might be lost. The Chief Executive commented that water was the biggest issue: how it arrives, travels through and leaves the site. The deluge in October that the Chairman referred to was not a one off and we needed to better attenuate water on the site. There could be benefits for wildlife in having wet sites and this could be incorporated into the master plan and assessment work in how we might deal with this.

3. Nick Evans, local resident

Mr Evans asked about the publication of the June Annual Open Meeting minutes which he could not yet see on the website, some 6 months after the meeting. Was this satisfactory?

The Chairman commented that the minutes were subject to review by the Board prior to publication, which had been done by the Board at their December meeting. The Chief Executive reported they had been published on the website that weekend.

Mr Evans commented that with regard to the Heritage Lottery, in the application there was mention of the change of status of Mr Lee and Mr Bound, with Mr Lee stepping aside. The Chief Executive clarified that one of the issues covered by the lottery grant is resilience within the organisation and in order to release capacity for staff to be able to step up to take other roles. A temporary fixed term position had been created to assist the Maintenance Team, allowing staff to temporarily step up and gain further experience. Mr Bound would be taking on some work of the Chief Executive to allow the Chief Executive to focus on the project work. Mr Evans commented that this was not clear on the website.

He further asked whether it was sensible for the assessment of the use of the Commons to be carried out in winter as the use would be very different in summer. The Chief Executive commented that this was part of a number of surveys being carried out throughout the year –

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some as part of the project and others funded by the Conservators. The Chairman commented that as far as possible they were trying to replicate the survey carried out in 1976.

4. Howard Richards, local resident

With regard to the funfair – was this encouraged for “cultural” reasons or because of the income?

The Chief Executive commented that having worked for many years in open spaces, funfairs were a traditional part of the ethos of open space life and they do also create an income. We worked closely with the Showman’s Guild. Both fairs that came to the Commons were very supportive of the organisation.

5. Mary Hirsch, local resident

Mrs Hirsch commented that she was impressed by the works to reclaim and rewild the Beverley Brook and thought that the work had been beneficial.

Dr Taylor commented that informal monitoring revealed that the work had gone well and was achieving its aims. Once the monitoring could start again in Spring there would be a full year of monitoring and findings would hopefully be published later in 2020. There had been more sightings of birds such as Kingfishers and egrets which was encouraging. The berms were already starting to provide habitats and the numbers of fish being seen showed that the work was beneficial.

6. John Cameron, local resident

Mr Cameron asked whether the proposal to amend the levy to increase income was being done to offset the pension deficit. He understood that the increase would not be likely to benefit the Common in any way.

The Chairman reiterated her previous comment that the increase in the levy was to properly fund preventative maintenance and capital expenditure.

Mr Ware commented that the quantum of the deficit on the pension is one that is calculated in accordance with accounting standards, it was not necessarily a statement of what the charity would have to pay in the future. The amount paid was determined by a triennial actuarial valuation of the Merton Pension Fund of which the Charity was a part. The next valuation was currently being prepared and would be presented in the first quarter of 2020. This would dictate what would actually have to be paid in the ensuing three years. It was unlikely that the liability on the balance sheet would actually become payable because the basis on which the liability was calculated for accounting purposes is not the same as that calculated for actuarial purposes to support the amount of pension payable to pensioner over the next 30 or so years. The increase in the levy was very unlikely to go towards funding the pension scheme as we are already making a contribution of £21,000 of deficit funding out of operating expenses, which was the amount that the actuary deemed necessary at the last valuation in 2017. In response to a comment, he said that of course the position he had outlined was not guaranteed but it was unlikely that there would be a requirement for substantial increases in pension funding.

Mr Cameron commented that he did not believe Mr Ware. Mr Ware suggested that this might be because Mr Cameron did not understand pension accounting.

7. Prue Whyte, Putney Lower Common

2021 would be the 150th Anniversary of Wimbledon and Putney Commons. The organisation also became a charity in 1972 and, noting the work of the Constitution Working Group, was seeking assurance that the two governing pieces of legislation – the Wimbledon and Putney Commons

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Act and the Charity Act – that there could be some resolution and that going forward the conflicting issues could be resolved.

The Chairman commented that the aligning of the two documents was at the heart of the work of the Constitutional Working Group and gave the example of the process of signing off the accounts. This process was stipulated in the Commissioners Clauses and required WPCC to publish the accounts 14 days before presenting them for approval at the Annual Open Meeting, the date for which was stipulated in the byelaws; under certain circumstances, this could make it impossible to meet the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (account submission within 10 months of year end).

8. John Mays

Mr Mays asked if the costs of reviewing and/or changing the constitution was set in the budget.

Mr Ware commented that in the financial statements for last year, a figure of between £75,000 and £95,000 had been set aside. This would be updated as and when the charity knew what options would be available to them. He hoped to be able to provide a better picture at the Annual Open Meeting in 2020. The Chairman reiterated that there were many areas where the Act was silent and it was these issues that the charity was seeking to clarify.

9. Nick Evans

Mr Evans commented that he believed that the Charity Commission would be publishing the report into the Statutory Inquiry in January. Did the Board know when in January?

The Chairman commented that the last formal communication they had received from the Charity Commission was that it would be published in the fourth quarter of 2019 but understood that for varying reasons this would now be in January.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and reminded guests about the forthcoming events published on the back of the Agenda.