

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, MARCH 2014

Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on Monday 10 March 2014 at 5pm in the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common, London SW19 5NR.

Conservators Present: Mr D Devons (Chairman)
Sir Ian Andrews
Mr D Frampton
Mr J Horrocks
Mr A Simon (Vice-Chairman)
Dr R Taylor
Professor R Touquet

Officers Present: Mr S Lee (Chief Executive)
Ms P Graystone (Deputy Clerk & Ranger)
Ms A Evans (PA to the Chief Executive)

4 members of the public.

03.14.1 Apologies

Mrs J Evanson

03.14.2 Declarations of Interest

Mr Devons and Mr Simon confirmed they were both trustees of the Wimbledon Windmill Museum Trust. Mr Simon was also an executive member of the Wimbledon Society and sat on the PCC of Putney Parish. Mr Horrocks confirmed he was an executive member of the Putney Society.

03.14.3 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February were approved without amendment.

03.14.4 Chief Executive's Report

The Chief Executive commented that this was his predecessor's report and future reports would have a different style.

Mounted Keeper – The Mounted Keeper who had suffered a heart attack before Christmas was now fully recovered and back at work.

Accident/Emergency Procedures – A further meeting was being held on 18 March 2014 with the three stables that use the Commons to finalise the accident/emergency procedures.

Harvey-Piper Bench – The bench to commemorate Mr Harvey-Piper had been ordered and was expected to be delivered in the next few weeks.

Windmill – The Chairman reported that Mr Marcus Beale had provided a detailed specification for the repair of the Windmill and, out of eleven specialist companies approached, only three had expressed an interest in tendering for the repair work. Due to work commitments, however, none had any availability during 2014. The Chairman

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had suggested that the repair of the tower boarding and the re-asphalting of the roof could be carried out by a general builder, providing the work specification was sufficiently detailed, and that this should be done as soon as possible to prevent further water ingress; the more specialist repairs, including to the buck/cap, could be deferred until 2015. Mr Beale had therefore agreed to obtain quotations for this more immediate work.

The Chief Executive commented that he would like some reassurance from Mr Beale that, if the repair work revealed more extensive remedial works requiring specialist support, the necessary repairs would be able to be carried out.

Roehampton School Gates – Despite several e-mails and telephone calls from the Office, the Headmaster had not yet made contact to arrange a meeting. This would be followed up again. Mr Horrocks commented that he wished to attend that meeting.

Meeting with Justine Greening MP – A meeting with Justine Greening MP had been arranged for 4 April 2014 and would be attended by the Chairman, Mr Simon, Mr Horrocks and the Chief Executive.

Prudential Ride London – Some further details of the Prudential Ride London event on 9/10 August were available for the Conservators' information. Mr Frampton commented that he believed the route had now been finalised and had not changed from last year. However, his local Residents' Association had been involved in discussions with Merton Council and the event organisers, and arrangements had been put in place to help local residents, such as a crossing point between Ridgway and the Belvederes, and taxis to take people short distances.

Bus Turning Circle, Putney Lower Common – An on-site meeting to consider the proposed changes had now been arranged with TfL for 11am on Thursday 13 March. Any Conservators wishing to attend were welcome.

03.14.5 Matters Arising

REMPF – In response to a question from Mr Horrocks, the Chief Executive confirmed that the ground at the REMPF was improving with the drier weather but there had been no casual play at all this year. The regular weekend teams were now having to make up the games that they had not been able to play so far this year.

03.14.6 Natural History Sub-Committee

1. Report of the Meeting held on 19 February

Dr Taylor reported that the meeting had focused mainly on arrangements for the exercise on the monitoring of the Plain. She was pleased that several local experts would be joining the March 2014 NHSC meeting to help in the preparation of both the longer-term monitoring and the proposed Bioblitz later in the year.

A list of support materials had been drawn up and passed to the Wildlife and Conservation Officer to purchase for the Information Centre ahead of the Bioblitz event.

The Wildlife and Conservation Officer had provided his monthly update report.

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A discussion had been held on the best way to make older survey results - mainly carried out by researchers/students - available to the public. The Chief Executive commented that he would speak to the Wildlife and Conservation Officer to discuss possible options and report back to the Board.

2. Nature Trail Booklet

The Conservators considered the new Nature Trail booklet and they all considered it a very useful document in helping to raise the profile of the site and its importance for nature conservation. Subject to some minor amendments from the Chairman and Mr Horrocks that would be forwarded to the Chief Executive's PA, the booklet was approved. A quotation had been provided for commercial printing and it was agreed that it was worthwhile having the booklet professionally set and printed. After some discussion, it was agreed that a selling price of £2 would be suitable.

03.14.7 Newsletter

The draft Newsletter was considered. The following amendments were agreed:

1. Make the date of the Annual Open Meeting more prominent on the front page and on page 3.
2. Add a sentence to clarify that the Conservators' role was unremunerated.

It was suggested that the date of the Annual Open Meeting be advertised on local radio.

The Chairman and Mr Horrocks would send some further amendments direct to the Chief Executive's PA.

03.14.8 Merton Council, Cycling

Dr Taylor reported that she had read in that day's paper that Merton had not been successful in their bid for funds in the Mayor of London's "Mini-Holland" cycling project. The Chairman pointed out that Merton Council still wished to proceed with their proposals for a cycle route on the Common along Parkside regardless and would fund the project from other sources.

A brief report had been received from Mr Nicholas, the Borough Cycling Officer at Merton Council, and the Chairman expressed his disappointment that no comment had been made on the Conservators' suggestions laid out in the detailed report prepared by the Chairman. Mr Nicholas' proposal was to widen the current pavement up to 2.3m onto Common land to create a 3.5m shared-use pedestrian and cycling route. It was also noted that Mr Nicholas proposed to liaise with his counterparts in Wandsworth Council to extend this shared use route up to Tibbet's Corner, so creating a commuter route. Mr Nicholas also proposed additional street lighting on Common land which would illuminate the woodland alongside the proposed shared-use route; concerns were raised that this might have potential issues for bats colonising the adjacent trees.

The Conservators agreed that the proposal was not appropriate for the Commons. It went against the ethos of the 1871 Act and would be detrimental to the natural aspect of the Commons. Concern was also expressed that the construction works might affect the roots of many of the mature trees along the proposed route that could be detrimental to

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The Chief Executive undertook to give the matter some thought and report back to the Board with some proposals in due course.

Mr Mays, who was in the audience, commented that the Wimbledon Society would be happy to help if that was considered appropriate.

03.14.12 Water Trough, Parkside

The Drinking Fountain Association had responded to the Conservators' suggestion that the trough remain where it was commenting that they were obligated to ensure troughs were utilised. The Conservators agreed that they did not wish the trough to be moved onto the Common since connecting to a water supply would be difficult, and the Chief Executive was asked to respond to them accordingly.

03.14.13 Bookfest 2014

The organisers of the Bookfest had asked the Conservators for permission to sell tea, cakes, and wine in the Bookfest Marquee on Rushmere in October. The event was struggling financially having made a loss in 2013 and it was hoped this would help raise funds to support this popular community event.

The Conservators considered the request and agreed that selling tea/coffee and cakes etc. was acceptable. They further agreed that selling alcohol would be acceptable, on a one year trial basis, providing that sales were made to ticket-holders only. The matter would be reviewed next year.

It was noted that in the Event Guidelines no mention was made of selling alcohol. It was suggested that these should be reviewed in due course and the Chief Executive undertook to look into this.

03.14.14 Any Other Business

Attack on Putney Heath - Mr Horrocks reported that at a recent meeting with the Roehampton Safer Neighbourhood Team it had been reported that a man had been arrested for the attack on a lady on Putney Heath in the autumn.

North View/Camp View - Mr Simon reported that the recent wet weather had resulted in some flooding on the corner of North View and Camp View. This had only been resolved once Merton Council had cleared a street drain. The Chief Executive reported that he was aware of this issue and the need for some clearance to the edge of the Common but was also mindful that the bird-nesting season was beginning. He would arrange to meet Merton Council to consider this matter.

03.14.15 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 14 April 2014 at 5pm at the Information Centre

The meeting finished at 6.35pm

