

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, SEPTEMBER 2014

Minutes of the Conservators' Meeting held on Monday 8 September 2014 at 5pm in the Information Centre, Wimbledon Common, London SW19 5NR.

Conservators Present: Mr D Devons (Chairman)
Sir Ian Andrews
Mr Derek 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 Chief Executive)

4 members of the public

09.14.1 Apologies

Mrs Jenny Evanson

09.14.2 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.

09.14.3 Approval of the Minutes of Meeting held on 11 August

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 August were approved without amendment.

09.14.4 Matters Arising

None.

09.14.5 Chief Executive's Report

The Conservators noted the Chief Executive's report (copy attached for the archive). The following points were raised:

A MATTERS ARISING FROM JULY 2014 MEETING

- i. **Alder Trees** – It was agreed that the replacement of the dead Alder tree would be paid for by the Conservators.
- ii. **Legacy** – Mr Horrocks suggested that the legacy might be used for the enhancement of the footpath along the Beverley Brook Walk at Putney Lower Common. The Chief Executive commented that it had also been suggested that the legacy might go towards the substantial refurbishment required at the REMPF

Wimbledon and Putney Commons Conservators, SEPTEMBER 2014

memorial. It was noted that the estate had not specified any preference on how the money be spent.

- iii. The Chairman commented that if not all the points mentioned in the Chief Executive's report were discussed, they would not appear in the minutes and might be difficult to find if they needed to be referred to later. It was agreed that any important points discussed would be referred to and that the report would be attached to the minutes.

B GENERAL UPDATE

- i. **Conservators Election 2015** – With regard to the election information document, a number of further amendments were proposed which would be incorporated into the version which would be available for the Open Day. The website would also be updated to reflect them.

The Chief Executive reported that he had been liaising with Ordnance Survey about the production of a more definitive digitalised map of the Levying area and work on this was underway.

- ii. **Putney Lower Common Hospital Site** – The Chief Executive reported that the Deed of Easement had been formally discharged and work had commenced on demolition of the hospital buildings. The sum received for the easement was £350,000. He reminded the Conservators that this had been determined by a firm of professional valuers employed by the Conservators to negotiate on their behalf with Wandsworth Council. The Chairman commented that the original valuation had been £250,000 but the intervening three years had seen an increase of £100,000. Sir Ian Andrews observed that, in his view, the process had been handled very professionally throughout.

Mr Horrocks commented that the Conservators were being criticised for selling the easement to the school for £1. The Chairman explained that the land on which the hospital was built had originally been donated for public use and the Conservators were of the opinion that at least a substantial part of the site should remain for public use. Therefore, when the original sum of £250,000 was agreed with the Primary Care Trust, the Conservators made it clear that the residential development must pay the full easement value. The easement to the Primary Care Trust was limited to the provision of health services free at the point of delivery for which the Conservators charged a nominal amount, ie £1. Consequently, if at any time in the future the clinic became private and charged for its services, a commercial rate for the easement could be charged. The same principle was applied when negotiations began with Wandsworth Council so that the school would be free to the public at the point of delivery. If the school became private and charged for its services, the Conservators could demand a fully commercial rate for a new easement.

In order to publicise this, and to correct other misleading information that was circulating, it was agreed that the Chief Executive would prepare a Frequently Asked Questions document to be made public now that the Deed of Easement had been completed.

iii. **Events**

Mr Simon commented that one of the reasons why the Conservators had agreed to Parnhams having their Children's Fair on the Rushmere in August/September was that it was much smaller than their June fair. However, posters around the area were advertising the fair as "bigger and better". The Chief Executive agreed to speak to Mr Parnham.

C Keeper Update

The Chief Executive had produced a three-month report of incidents in graph form. Mr Horrocks queried why there were significantly more incidents in May than during June or July. The Chief Executive reported that this was mainly because, as a result of staff holidays, training days and one Keeper leaving, there had been fewer Keepers out on the Commons. He thought the three-month review of incidents was an important benchmark from which to monitor yearly activity, and provided useful data on which to base future operational decisions.

In response to a question, the Chief Executive commented that the Miscellaneous item included matters such as lost children, fishing etc.

09.14.6 Natural History Sub-Committee

The Conservators noted the report of the Natural History Sub-Committee of 20 August (copy attached for the archive).

OPM - Dr Taylor reported that, since the meeting, she had read an article about a trial currently taking place on injecting trees to help curb the Oak Processionary Moth. In response to a question about why the nests needed to be removed once the moths had left, Dr Taylor commented that dead caterpillars remained in the nest and still shed hairs that could be a health hazard. The Chief Executive reported that the Forestry Commission were focusing on containment of the infestation at its boundary and, as the Commons fell in the core area, they would not be providing any assistance in nest removal. This would result in a substantial amount of necessary but time-consuming work for the staff. It was suggested that it would be useful to have GPS locations for the nests.

Holly Hedge Project - Dr Taylor reported that the Sub-Committee was happy with the progress of the Holly hedge project and had approved the work for the next stage in front of Queensmere Cottage and the Golf Club. Following a discussion on what plants should be used, it was agreed that a mix of holly and indigenous species including Blackthorn and Hawthorn should be planted. This would make the hedge more wildlife-friendly, particularly for nesting birds, but it would still remain neat and in keeping with the other hedges in the area.

Visitor survey – The Visitor survey was underway and progressing more slowly than expected but was going well.

Bat Walk/Moth Event – Dr Taylor was pleased to report that, following on from the BioBlitz, another Bat Walk/Moth Event had been organised for 4 October. A lot of butterfly records were also being submitted.

09.14.7 Any Other Business

Signage on Trees – Mr Horrocks reported that, at a recent meeting of the Wandsworth Tree Wardens, a local resident had complained about the possible damage to trees by signs being either screwed or stapled to them. The resident had spoken to the Ranger's Office and the screwed-in signs had been removed. The Chief Executive would look into the matter.

Milestone, Putney Lower Common – Mr Horrocks reported that an Ailanthus (Tree of Heaven) sucker was growing inside the hoarding protecting the milestone on Putney Lower Common and he was concerned it may damage the stone. The Chief Executive would raise the issue when he attended the first design team meeting.

09.14.8 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Monday 13 October

The meeting finished at 17.45pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Pearson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and 'P'.